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## The One – Way (Agri)Cultural Mirror: A Case Study of How Young Agriculturalists Understand and Experience Culture

Janiece M. Pigg

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# **THE ONE – WAY (AGRI)CULTURAL MIRROR: A CASE STUDY OF HOW YOUNG AGRICULTURALISTS UNDERSTAND AND EXPERIENCE CULTURE**

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Science

in

The Department of Agricultural and Extension Education and Evaluation

by  
Janiece Pigg  
B.S., Mississippi State University, 2019  
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## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my beloved brother, Davis. You have been my best friend, continuous support system, and loving mentor since day one. You deserve the world, but all I can give you are these words. Thank you for everything you have done for me!

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

As the global economy continues to transform how society operates, cultural competence has become a buzzword in education, professional development, research, government, and healthcare (Gay, 1994; Gallus et al., 2014). Cross et al. (1989) developed the most accepted definition of cultural competence: “a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations” (p. 13).

Despite this, little to no research has been devoted to understanding cultural competence in agriculture. Thus, a need emerged to describe the cultural competence of young agriculturalist in Louisiana. As such, this case study aimed to address the dearth in knowledge. There was a total of five study participants, all who were young agriculturalist in the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers and Ranchers program in 2020-2021. Through rigorous data analysis, four themes and three subthemes emerged. They included: (a) cultural anxiety, (b) cultural pressure, (c) the one-way (agri)cultural mirror, and (d) cultural lens expansion. The young agriculturalists expressed anxiety and apprehension to discuss cultural competency because of fear of negative social ramifications. And as a result, this yielded a cultural pressure to adopt a culturally competent mindset to be successful in the agricultural industry in Louisiana. Additionally, the participants noted that the agricultural profession was an recognizable cultural identity. This distinction has produced a one-way cultural mirror whereby consumers and producers cannot view and understand one another. Because of this cultural barrier, the young agriculturalists recognized a need to further expand their cultural lens, through domestic and international experiences, to better serve a culturally diverse population. Therefore, I recommended that more professional development opportunities can be offered through 4-H,

FFA, and Ag in the Classroom, to initiate cultural competence development from an earlier age. Additionally, this study furthered the need to understand and develop intrinsic motivation for young agriculturalist to gain cultural competence as they navigate the globalized industry of agriculture.



# **CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION**

## **Background of the Problem**

As the global economy continues to transform how society operates, cultural competence has become a buzzword in education, professional development, research, government, and healthcare (Gay, 1994; Gallus et al., 2014). Literature across various fields has captured the motivations for culturally competent individuals, however, empirical evidence on cultural competence is in its infancy (Gallus et al., 2014; Horvat et al., 2014; Moncloa et al. 2019; Suh, 2004). The broad term has evolved to include various concepts with an overlapping conceptual basis such as: (a) intercultural competence, (b) cross-cultural competence (3C), and (c) intercultural sensitivity (Gallus et al., 2014). Further, the literature on cultural competence exhibits a congruence of themes including cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, cultural skill, cultural experiences, and cultural sensitivity (Cross et al., 1989; Dudas, 2012; Jirwe et al., 2009; Moncloa et al. 2019). Cultural competency or cross-cultural competency (3C) has varying definitions dependent on the context in which the phenomenon is situated (Gay, 1994). Gallus et al. (2014) stated:

One of the challenges of studying cross-cultural competence is the difficulty in operationalizing the construct itself. While scientists have been able to identify consistencies across existing 3C models, there continues to be debate over what actual knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics comprise 3C (p. 7).

Although cultural competence definitions and conceptualizations have been actively debated, multicultural education, an antecedent to cultural competence, emphasized the need to fully understand diverse cultures across contexts when developing educational programs, rather than focusing on one perspective or definition (Gay, 1994). Many conceptions of multicultural

education include (a) common assumptions, (b) common concerns, (c) common actionable standards, and (d) universal desire for culturally pluralistic diversity standards ingrained into all levels of the educational system (Gay, 1994).

Outside the scope of education, the concept of cultural competency has been most comprehensively researched in the context of healthcare; therefore, definitions and literature on the concept originate predominantly from a medical perspective. In healthcare fields such as nursing and mental health, cultural competence is often used to describe discrepancies in medical care for minority groups (Chiarenza, 2012; Seeleman et al., 2009; Suh, 2004). From medical perspective, essential cultural competencies of professionals included an understanding of the cultural, ethnic, and social knowledge needed to effectively assess patients from diverse backgrounds (Seeleman et al., 2009; Suh, 2004). From a social work specialization in which cultural diversity is a core moral standard, cultural competence has been viewed as an expectation and a deeply integrated moral principle for all members of the profession (Garran & Werkmeister Rozas, 2013). Through this lens, cultural competence can be defined as:

A process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each (Garran & Werkmeister Rozas, 2013, p. 98).

In a military context, cultural competence has been defined as, “the set of knowledge, skills, and affect/motivation that enable individuals to adapt effectively in cross-cultural environments” (Gallus et al., 2014, p. 6). Because the military must maintain an international applicable skill set and, therefore exists a heightened need for an understanding of cultural

diversity. In the United States Department of Defense (DoD), cultural competence has become a subject with importance for institutional research, training, and development (Gallus et al., 2014). Gallus et al. (2014) explained that cultural competence has been vital to be effective in the culturally interactive environment of the DoD.

The term *culture*, itself, is a vague and broad encompassing term that is reliant on context. The most accepted definition of *cultural competence* is, “a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations” (Cross et al. 1989, p. 13). Although terminology is vague and disputed, literature across various fields has cited a need and motivation for the development of culturally competent individuals; however, research regarding cultural competence is in its infancy (Gallus et al., 2014). Despite this, little to no research has been devoted to understanding cultural competence in agriculture.

The agricultural industry has been most affected by globalization in regard to environmental shifts in the economic, social, and political world climate (Robinson, 2018). For example, globalization has influenced changes in the industry including: (a) worldwide quality standardization of agricultural products, (b) improved ability to produce more food for a growing world population, (c) increased agricultural corporation investments in rural and developing communities, and (d) positive cultural integration and regeneration in the agricultural industry (Robinson, 2018). On this point, MacDonald et al. (2015) explained that agricultural trade across the globe “is worth more than US \$520 billion per year, could feed approximately two billion people, and uses about 13% of worldwide cropland and pasture” (p. 275). The economic, political, and social implications of globalization have progressed into the agricultural industry into a professional trade that thrives and evolves on the momentum of the global economy

(MacDonald et al., 2015; Robinson, 2018). Further, the agricultural industry has recognized a need for cultural competence throughout the industry's workforce (Farm Aid, 2019).

Because of the scope and influence of globalization in agriculture, many industry-based organizations have advocated for the development of cultural competence in their membership, as well as the industry as a whole (Deen et al., 2014, Farm Aid, 2019; Moncloa et al. 2019). For agricultural producers, an emphasis on marketing and advertising has helped to reach a new generation of consumers with vast informational resources available through increased technology use (Mahaliyanaarachchi & Bandara, 2006). However, shifts in organizational culture can be challenging to implement and are dependent on the organization's ability to create an environment whereby desirable behaviors and attitudes can be fostered and accommodated (Chambers, 2005). Widespread industry shifts are dependent on an organization's ability to strategically communicate sufficient information to those in the industry to accommodate such an organizational transformation (Chambers, 2005; Glisson, 2007; Sun 2009). One avenue to improve agricultural industry's cultural competence is to begin at the source of the problem – the education of agriculturalists.

Agricultural education in the U.S. public education system has begun to recognize the need for culturally competent high school graduates (Grant, 2020; Vincent & Torres, 2015; Woods, 2004). The shifting demographic of the agricultural industry has introduced a variety of cultural diversity issues such as educational content ethnocentrism and cultural exclusion through educational policy, whereby secondary agricultural education struggle to foster culturally competent graduates that are prepared to operate in a globalized agricultural workforce (Grant, 2020; Vincent & Torres, 2015; Woods, 2004).

For instance, Vincent and Torres (2015) discovered FFA chapter advisors who have a larger range of cultural diversity in their student organizations are more aware, knowledgeable, and prepared to accommodate students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Moreover, students in secondary agriscience programs can identify and recognize the educators' levels of cultural competence when the standard of cultural competence has not been met (Vincent & Torres, 2015). Therefore, Vincent and Torres (2015) expressed a need for higher education institutions to better prepare preservice secondary agricultural educators to incorporate culturally competent teaching practices and perspectives in their curriculum.

In congruence with the efforts in secondary agricultural education, institutions of higher education have also noted the need for students to become culturally competent in the globalized economy (Alston et al., 2020; Alston et al., 2019). In particular, colleges of agriculture have recognized that international experience and study abroad courses can develop cultural competence in students (Grant, 2020; Rampold et al., 2020). In a globalized society in which agricultural graduates are expected to enter the workforce prepared, international cultural diversity exposure has become a valued characteristic of agricultural graduates (Bost & Wingenbach, 2018). Further, the development cultural competence, through international culturally explorative experiences are considered a valued incentive of study abroad programming (Bost & Wingenbach, 2018). Woods (2004) explained how cultural competence in agricultural education should include (a) the mentality of cultural significance, (b) assessment of intercultural interactions, (c) attention to potential culturally controversial dynamics, (d) integrated expansion of cultural knowledge, and (e) adaptability to unique cultural needs.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Although significant improvements have been made to expand educational opportunities in formal education, non-formal educational programs in various agricultural organizations have emerged to help educate professionals in the industry. In particular, the Cooperative Extension Service (CES), an organization which promotes agricultural education, research, and training for youth and adults, has developed training programs and offerings to improve the focus on globalization and cultural competence (Deen et al, 2014; Herndon et al., 2013; Monocloa et. al, 2019). As an illustration, the systemic integration of cultural competence through professional development opportunities has been shown to increase cultural competence of agricultural systems (Monocloa et. al, 2019; Braverman et. al, 2012). Further, agriculturalists who are considered culturally competent have been found to be better prepared to address the needs of diverse cultural populations (Monocloa et. al, 2019).

To improve existing educational programs and foster the development of new professional development programs, a need existed to better understand the status of cultural competence in the agricultural industry. Therefore, this investigation aimed to address this deficiency in knowledge regarding the cultural competence of young agriculturalists. To better understand how young professionals in agriculture view culture, this study sought to describe the cultural attitudes, competence, and experiences of young agriculturalists in Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers and Ranchers Organization.

## **Conceptual Framework**

The Winters Group (n.d.) Cultural Competence Model™ described the stages an individual should endure to reach and maintain cultural competence. Consequently, the four-

stage model is a linear process and as an individual evolves through the linear continuum, they conduct a series of internal, self-reflective analyses at each phase. The four components of this model are cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, cultural sensitivity, and cultural competence (Winters Group, n.d.). This framework was chosen because of the individualized nature of the model. For instance, in the present study, I aimed to understand the cultural competence of members of the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers and Ranchers.

It is vital to note that progression through this model is consequential in nature, thus dependent on the individual's advancement throughout each phase. An individual cannot progress to the next phase without completing all phases preceding it. For example, an individual cannot move to the cultural knowledge, without first completing cultural awareness. Therefore, once reaching cultural competence, an individual would be considered culturally aware, knowledgeable, sensitive, and competent.

During the first stage of cultural awareness, an individual begins to question their own beliefs, values, and cultural norms, as well as the beliefs, values, and cultural norms of other cultures (Bunch et al., 2018; Rampold et al., 2020, Winters Group, n.d). Essentially, this stage is an inquisitive phase of validating one's own culture and the cultures of others (Bunch et al., 2018; Winters Group, n.d). Once an individual has accomplished this, they move to cultural knowledge.

During cultural knowledge, an individual begins to deeply analyze the differences between their culture and the culture of others (Bunch et al., 2018; Winters Group, n.d). In essence, an individual begins to look for deeper connections and juxtaposes components of their culture to that of others (Bunch et al., 2018; Winters Group, n.d). Further, through this analysis of knowledge, an individual begins to realize what subsequent knowledge and understanding is

needed to better comprehend cultures they do not identify with, as well as their own cultural identity (Bunch et al., 2018; Winters Group, n.d).

Once an individual is culturally knowledgeable, they advance to cultural sensitivity. In cultural sensitivity, an individual begins to analyze his or her own personal abilities such as whether they are accepting, openminded, and tolerant of others' cultural beliefs, values, and norms (Bunch et al., 2018; Winters Group, n.d). In this phase, therefore, the aim is for an individual to assess their own ability to function and work respectfully and ethically in a system where other cultures are present (Bunch et al., 2018; Winters Group, n.d).

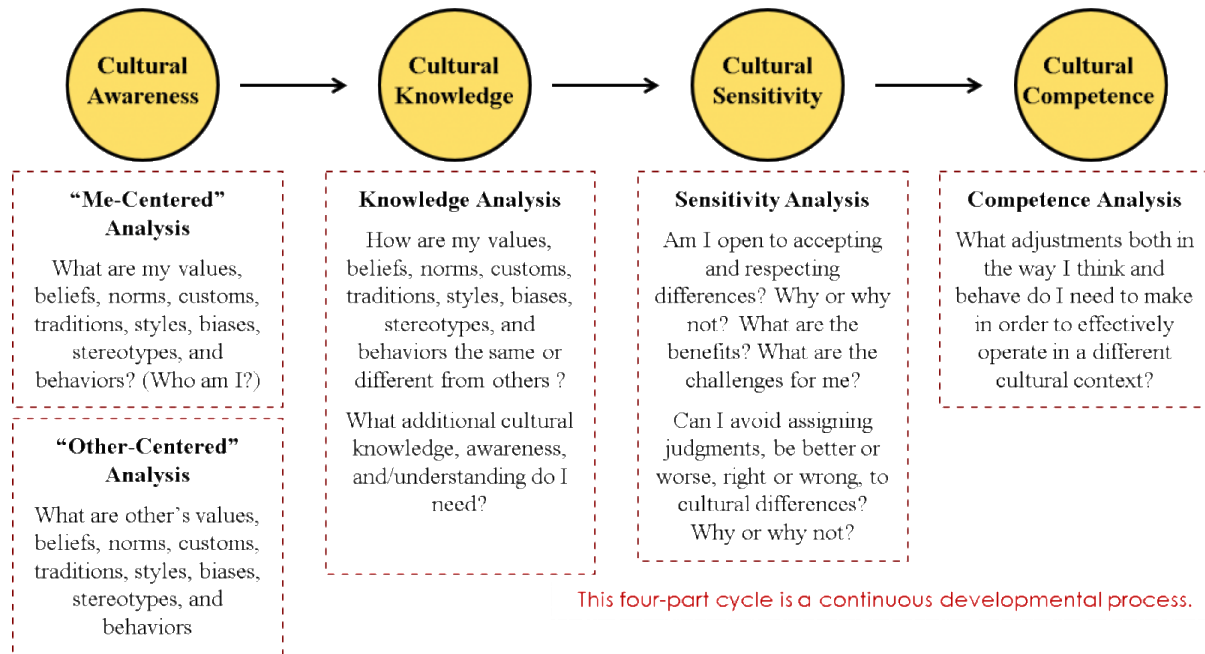
Once an individual progresses through the cultural sensitivity, they move to the fixed stage of cultural competence. This is the final phase in which an individual determines that ongoing modifications are required in their life to maintain a culturally competent personal and professional lifestyle (Bunch et al., 2018; Winters Group, n.d). Once an individual reaches this phase of cultural competence, they will maintain this stage if continual analysis is conducted regarding their awareness, knowledge, and sensitivity toward other cultures (Bunch et al., 2018; Winters Group, n.d).

**Figure 1.**

*Winters Group Cultural Competence Model™*



# Cultural Competence Model™



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## Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to understand how young agriculturalist understood and experienced cultural competence in Louisiana.

## Research Question

One research question guided this investigation:

1. What was the cultural competence of young agriculturalists in Louisiana?

## Limitations

To accurately represent the data, the limitations of this investigation must be disclosed to fully represent the findings. The following are considered limitations of this qualitative investigation. In the state of Louisiana, a controversy appeared to exist regarding cultural competence. This greatly hindered my ability recruit participants for this investigation. Although

acceptable for qualitative research methodology, the lack of participation hindered the investigation's transferability to other populations. Additionally, this study used self-reported data; therefore, the participants had the ability to represent themselves inaccurately or inadequately. Another limitation was the distinct lack of prior research on the cultural competence in general, and most notably, in the agricultural industry. Without a strong foundation of literature, the conclusions of this investigation are lacked empirical grounding.

### **Delimitations**

This investigation also had several delimitations that may have altered the emergent findings of this study. To begin, specific population parameters such as timeframe, organization, and age were considered delimitations because this was the most accessible population. This limited the scope constrained the number of perspectives expressed in this investigation and excluded consumers and others who interacted with the industry from the discussion surrounding cultural competence in agriculture.

This study was also limited to the Winters Group (n.d.) Cultural Competence Model, the conceptual framework by which data was interpreted. This model was not considered a complete perspective of cultural competence because it only provided a positive view of cultural competence development. For example, if a participant were not culturally aware, describing their cultural competence through the model would not be possible. Additionally, another delimitation of this investigation included time and resource constraints. For example, because of the COVID-19 global pandemic, a limited number of participants and data sources.

## **Assumptions**

To accurately represent the data, my assumptions should be addressed, to fully understand the findings. The following are the assumptions I maintained throughout the research process. First, I assumed that the participants were truthful in their interview responses. Additionally, I assumed that participants were active in the agricultural industry, rather than stagnant, passive members. Finally, I assumed that participants possessed a base level of knowledge regarding the concept of cultural competence and possessed the ability to recognize the cultural competence in their lives and in the agricultural industry.

## **Definitions**

**Cooperative Extension System** – A formalized, interconnected system of agencies, established through the Smith-Lever Act in 1914, aimed to progress agricultural techniques, programs, and education in the United States (Rodgers, 1988).

**Cultural Awareness** – The first stage in the Winters Group Cultural Competence model where an individual begins to question and validate their own beliefs, values, and cultural norms, as well as, the beliefs, values, and cultural norms of other cultures (Bunch et al., 2018; Winters Group, n.d.).

**Cultural Competence** – A set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations (Cross et al., 1989, p. 13).

**Cultural Knowledge** – The second phase of the Winters Group Cultural Competence Model where an individual begins to deeply analyze the differences between their own culture and the culture of others and begins to look for deeper connections, juxtaposing

components of their own culture to that of other cultures and begins to realize what subsequent knowledge and understanding is needed to better understand their own culture and the culture of others (Bunch et al., 2018, Winters Group, n.d.).

**Cultural Sensitivity** – The third phase of the Winters Group Cultural Competence Model where an individual begins to analyze his or her own personal abilities to be openminded, accepting, and tolerant of others’ cultural beliefs, values, and norms (Bunch et al., 2018, Winters Group, n.d.).

**Culture** – The integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious, or social group (Cross et al., 1989, p. 3).

**Ethnocentrism** – “One’s own culture is experienced as central to reality in some way” and is demonstrated when an individual views other cultures through their own personal cultural lens and denies, raises question to, or dismisses the significance of cultural diversity (Bennett & Bennett, 2004, p. 14).

**Globalization** – A process that encompasses the causes, course, and consequences of transnational and transcultural integration of human and non-human activities (Al-Rodhan & Stoudmann, 2006, p. 2).

**Instrumental Case Study Approach** – an investigation whereby, “a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory” (Stake, 1994, p. 237).

**Land-Grant Institution** – A higher education institutions across the United States which received a plot of federal land, allocated through the Morrill Act of 1862, for educational

purposes devoted to agricultural and mechanical techniques (Croft, 2019; Pearson & Atucha, 2015; Sparks, 2014, Rodgers, 1988).

**Multicultural Education** – An antecedent to the conceptualization of cultural competency that emphasizes the need to fully understand diverse cultures across contexts to develop an educational program or structure (Gay, 1994).

**Study Abroad** – “An education abroad enrollment option designed to result in academic credit” (Peterson et al., p. 13).

**Winters Group Cultural Competence Model™** – A linear continuum model aimed to describe the stages, including cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, cultural sensitivity, and cultural competence, that an individual should progress through to reach and maintain cultural competence (Winters Group, n.d.).

## **CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Overview**

This chapter addresses the background, historical foundation, and scholarly research inquiring on cultural competence, globalization, legislation, and American Farm Bureau Federation in the U.S. agricultural industry. Because the agricultural industry's globally integrated economy, agriculturalists and organizations are forced to cultivate a workforce prepared for culturally diverse challenges. Although legislative measures were passed to further cultural competence, it was not until the most recent century that the United States has made progress in integrating cultural competence throughout all sectors of society including legislation, education, and professional development.

### **Globalization**

U.S. agriculture has been impacted by countries across the world because of increased globalization. As a consequence, cultural competence has been recognized as a necessity of those who operate in this industry (Tomlinson, 2007; Von Braun & Diaz-Bonilla, 2008). Since the 1980's the agricultural economy has been drastically altered to accommodate a globalized economic system (Von Braun & Diaz-Bonilla, 2008).

As a result of increasingly present globalization, the agricultural industry has seen (a) strides in commodity innovation, (b) integration of smaller scale production operations, and (c) changes in consumer demands (Von Braun & Diaz-Bonilla, 2008). Consumers of agricultural products are more connected on an international scale due to the globalized measures set forth in the industry, such as specialized international commodities, increased international investment, and increased social and environmental conservation efforts (Tomlinson, 2007; Von Braun &

Diaz-Bonilla, 2008). Because of the interrelated nature of the industry at present, cultural competence has become an element of significance in all aspects of operation in the agricultural industry (Tomlinson, 2007).

Agriculture has historically relied on (a) workforce training, (b) professional development, and (c) commodity research and development to improve the industry (Jambor & Babu, 2016). The development and acquisition of innovative knowledge has allowed agriculturalists to improve production yields, increase profits, and remain globally competitive (Jambor & Babu, 2016; Von Braun & Diaz-Bonilla, 2008). Due to necessity for training and outreach, the agricultural industry has developed opportunities for its workforce to get personally, professionally, and socially engaged in their industry (Robertson, 1982). For example, there are a plethora of professional agricultural organizations devoted to commodity specific production, such as the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA), American Seed Trade Association (ASTA), American Feed Industry Association (AFIA), and National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), to name a few. There are also agricultural organizations, such as 4-H and the National FFA Organization, devoted to youth who are interested in agriculture. However, the increase in globalization has resulted in a need for increased professional development training and opportunities for producers to effectively connect with consumers, employees, and international colleagues (Clemons et al., 2017).

Agricultural organizations have served a variety of influential roles throughout history. Primarily, these organizations have provided professional training and outreach opportunities to allow members to develop proficiencies in new technologies and techniques that allow them to remain productive and competitive in their respective production systems (Food & Water Watch, 2010). Many of these organizations have also assisted agricultural producers in advocacy

and serve as representatives and lobbyists in local, state, and national governments. One such organization that has historically served to develop and advocate for agriculturalists has been the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) (American Farm Bureau Federation [AFBF], n.d.-a).

The wide scope of the AFBF provides an ideal cross section of the agricultural industry in Louisiana. The AFBF is a nonprofit, family-based organization, deeply rooted in advocacy, political influence, education, and individual empowerment in the agricultural industry in the United States (AFBF, n.d.-a). As an organizational mission, AFBF is the “unified national voice of agriculture” and the interests of agriculturalists in the United States (AFBF, n.d.-a).

### **History of the American Farm Bureau Federation**

In 1910, a lack of agricultural representation in policymaking procedures in the United States was negatively impacting the agricultural community (AFBF, n.d.-a). From this societal demand for producer representation in agricultural policies, AFBF was formed in 1919 as an innovative farm organization designed to give farmers and ranchers across the United States a voice during influential economic governmental policy discussions (AFBF, n.d.-a). From its humble beginnings in 1919, the AFBF has now soared to its current prominence as the largest general farm and ranch organization in the United States, totaling 5,993,27 members nationally in 2016. (American Farm Bureau Federation [AFBF], 2016; Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation [LFBF], n.d.-b). With over 6 million members in 2020, AFBF is cited throughout literature as “one of the most powerful interest groups in the United States” (Food and Water Watch, 2010, p. 1).



## **American Farm Bureau Federation and United States Politics**

Through the economic turmoil of the United States in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the AFBF was born by way of necessity. Robertson (1982) noted that agriculturalists suffering with economic strife would only be able to survive through education and organization of like-minded professionals. Although the groundwork of education and organization was previously established through the Cooperative Extension system throughout land-grant institutions established by the Smith-Lever Act in 1914, agriculturalists still desired genuine influence in policymaking that affected the industry (Sturgis, 1958; Robertson, 1982). According to Robertson (1982),

With the intense fluctuations in the marketplace, farmers throughout the United States were finding it necessary to organize for the first time in the country's history. A dedicated group of agriculture leaders immediately started to organize chapters in every state to begin building what was to become the largest voluntary farm organization in the world. Farmers had to unite in order to survive the rapidly changing policies in agriculture, production and marketing. The Farm Bureau was the vehicle for survival (p. 10).

The AFBF became a vessel for the progression of agricultural markets, agricultural education, and agricultural social networks throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Although the federation provides many benefits, AFBF's core mission is an ideal of agricultural advocacy and representation, therefore, their political efforts and self-proclaimed, "strong tradition of working for the collective good" have defined many decades of the organization (AFBF, n.d.-a). From its inception in 1919, AFBF has been involved in the legislative procedures of influential economic conversations that effect the agricultural industry, such as domestic and international trade markets, food safety, and food labeling (AFBF, n.d.-a).

### ***American Farm Bureau Federation 1919-1929***

During the early years of the organization, the AFBF situated itself to be privy to many influential beginnings for American agriculture (AFBF, n.d.-a). The AFBF was influential in the passing and establishment of the Packers and Stockyard Act, the Futures Trading Act, the Emergency Agricultural Credits Act, the Capper-Volstead Act, and the Tennessee Valley Authority Act (AFBF, n.d.-a). Each of these legislative actions, advocated into policy by the AFBF, allowed farmers and ranchers across the United States a great economic foundation for many years to come (AFBF, n.d.-a).

### ***American Farm Bureau Federation 1929-1939***

From 1929 to 1939, the AFBF was stricken with the economic, political, and environmental turmoil that enveloped the Great Depression era (AFBF, n.d.-a). During this time, farmers, ranchers, and agriculturalists across the country were experiencing low farm revenue due to low market prices and surplus production (AFBF, n.d.-a). Due to the dire nature of the situation, AFBF lobbied President Franklin Roosevelt for emergency resources to preserve, maintain, and regain economic security in the agricultural industry (AFBF, n.d.-a).

In addition to the economic turbulence of the nation, environmental conditions began to worsen across the United States in the early 1930s. The southern states were experiencing widespread drought which soon ushered in the Dust Bowl. At the end of the 1930s, with previous legislative measures fostered by AFBF, such as the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933, the United States agricultural industry began to slowly revive its economic strength into the 1940s (AFBF, n.d.-a).

### ***American Farm Bureau Federation 1939-1949***

From 1939 to 1949, AFBF was largely concentrated on accommodating World War II efforts and necessities (AFBF, n.d.-a). As individuals across the country were sent to war, the organization and its members began to prepare to “protect the nation’s food supply” throughout war time (AFBF, n.d.-a, para 4). As war efforts increased, the demographics of the agricultural industry’s workforce dramatically shifted to include more women and young children occupying the traditionally male dominated roles of agricultural production (AFBF, n.d.-a). As the war ended, AFBF began to shift its focus to increasing markets to stabilize the American agricultural industry in the event of national issues producing surplus commodities and decreasing farm revenue (AFBF, n.d.-a).

### ***American Farm Bureau Federation 1949-1959***

From 1949 to the end of 1959, AFBF sought out a larger variety of political and social influence. In 1949, AFBF strongly disputed a plan to control agricultural production through promises of higher commodity prices (AFBF, n.d.-a). AFBF revealed the unfeasibility and high taxpayer cost of such controls on the agricultural market and the governmental plan was soon dropped (AFBF, n.d.-a).

Along with exposing alleged schemes in the federal government, AFBF was also instrumental in the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act, also known as Public Law 480, which provides food and nutrition assistance to countries around the world (AFBF, n.d.-a). Shortly following this legislative victory in 1954, AFBF began a plan for early land conservation efforts in the United States (AFBF, n.d.-a). This plan, implemented in 1955, is now

known as the Soil Bank, which became the antecedent to modern volunteer conservation programs (AFBF, n.d.-a).

### ***American Farm Bureau Federation 1959-1969***

During the 1960s, AFBF was on the defensive, shielding farmers and ranchers from consumers, politicians, and unions aiming to undermine the agricultural industry's standards, procedures, and ethics (AFBF, n.d.-a). Throughout this decade, farm policy was continuously debated without ever reaching a consensus (AFBF, n.d.-a). The AFBF battled against the President Kennedy and President Johnson administrations when trying to decide an ideal path to increased farm income (AFBF, n.d.-a). Additionally, social backlash, through consumer boycotts and environmental propaganda, began to appear onto the social context of agricultural production (AFBF, n.d.-a). The AFBF took a stance to resolutely defend agriculturalists across the United States (AFBF, n.d.-a).

### ***American Farm Bureau Federation 1969-1979***

Shifting into 1970s, the United States was plagued with war and international trade barriers, as well as significant technological innovations and production successes that drastically changed the agricultural atmosphere of the United States (AFBF, n.d.-a). The United States Administration, namely President Nixon, imposed wage and price controls that socially and financially negatively affected the beef, pork, and lamb industries (AFBF, n.d.-a). Shortly following, the Soviet Union expanded into the United States' grain and meat markets due to extended inclement weather across the Soviet Union (AFBF, n.d.-a). Due to embargos and international trade barriers, notably the Arab Oil Embargo of 1973, public and political interest shifted into the production of Gasohol, a fuel developed from corn, (AFBF, n.d.-a). This demand

for corn-based fuel, now widely known as Ethanol, would become a strong source of revenue for American corn producers for many years to come.

### ***American Farm Bureau Federation 1979-1989***

Following the demand for Ethanol and a prosperous agricultural economy, the United States saw an administration change and, subsequently, governmental objectives change (AFBF, n.d.-a). The 1980s marked a period in the AFBF history where advocacy turned to tackle the widespread national farm debt (AFBF, n.d.-a). Additionally, the trade embargos with the Soviet Union that afflicted the United States' agricultural industry in the decade preceding were disbanded by President Reagan upon taking office (AFBF, n.d.-a). Governmental policy aimed to counteract inflation led to high interest rates that drastically affected agricultural producers who previously expanded operations in the prosperous 1970s decade. Due to such adversity in the agricultural economy, the American Agriculture Movement, a protest group, lead a "tractorcade" in Washington D.C. at the National Mall. Farm Bureau's response to the crisis was to provide assistance in the formulation of a debt restructuring program. This program was eventually accepted by Congress, banks, and Farm Credit system (AFBF, n.d.-a).

Furthering the standard for free and open trade, AFBF sent representatives to Europe and Japan in hopes of reducing trade barriers and opening international markets for American products (AFBF, n.d.-a). Although AFBF set to balance the federal budget via a Constitutional amendment, this legislation failed, by a narrow margin, and was not put into action (AFBF, n.d.-a).

### ***American Farm Bureau Federation 1989-1999***

The notion of free and open trade launched in the 1980s was advanced throughout AFBF in the 1990s. According to the AFBF (n.d.-a), “At the 1989 AFBF Annual Convention, Farm Bureau members were told they must think in terms of world markets and value-added products. Improving net farm income and expanding trade were top priorities for the organization” (para. 9). The foundation of reducing trade barriers, a notion which had been laid in the preceding decade, came to fruition in the form of open markets in Japan and Europe and the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Continuing the theme of “expanding trade and feeding the world” from 1989 to 1999, AFBF joined a pro-trade agreement coalition called “Ag for NAFTA” coalition AFBF (n.d.-a). This alliance was an instrumental advocacy agreement that led to the passing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1993 AFBF (n.d.-a). Additionally, the AFBF sought to protect property rights of agricultural producers when the Endangered Species Act was passed and, consequently, led to “unjustified ‘takings’ of private property” (AFBF, n.d.-a, para 9).

### ***American Farm Bureau Federation 1999-2009***

Through the turn of the millennium, AFBF further advanced their efforts to open international trade markets. The AFBF lobbied for permanent trade relationships with China and insisted on representation at the “Doha round of multilateral trade negotiations” (AFBF, n.d.-a, para. 10-11). Additionally, the AFBF supported various trade negotiation agreements enacted by the President Bush administration (AFBF, n.d.-a). AFBF also saw victory in the environmental science realm with the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (AFBF, n.d.-a). This legislation progressed demand for ethanol and biodiesel, therefore, reducing the United States’ dependence on foreign suppliers of oil (AFBF, n.d.-a).

### ***American Farm Bureau Federation 2009-2019***

Shifting into the most recent decade, AFBF concentrated efforts in long-term agricultural production sustainability (AFBF, n.d.-a). AFBF shifted focus to the heightened societal and governmental concerns that surrounded the environment. During this time, AFBF launched a “Don’t Cap our Future” campaign to encourage Congress to pass legislation which would require agricultural operations to offset their emissions. Additionally, according to AFBF (n.d.-a),

AFBF mounted a ‘Ditch the Rule’ campaign when EPA attempted a major land grab by changing the definition of waters of the United States under the Clean Water Act. In response to lawsuits by dozens of states and industry groups, including AFBF, several courts blocked the 2015 WOTUS rule, preventing it from being implemented in most states. President Trump issued an executive order to reconsider the rule, and EPA is now rewriting it. While the agency proceeds with its proposal to replace the 2015 rule, AFBF is aggressively pursuing court decisions that the rule was an unlawful abuse of EPA’s power under the Clean Water Act (para. 11).

AFBF also saw victory with concerns regarding labor in the agricultural industry. The United States Department of Labor (DOL) enacted a rule forbidding biologically related children to work and help their parents on family owned and operated farms (AFBF, n.d.-a). AFBF discredited this rule as “ridiculous” and the Department of Labor soon withdrew the proposal.

In 2019, AFBF celebrated its centennial birthday, as an organization (AFBF, n.d.-a). According to AFBF (n.d.-a), “Today, AFBF continues its work to build strong agricultural communities and strengthen the lives of rural Americans through grassroots advocacy that addresses ag’s most pressing issues and protects future generations of farmers and ranchers”

(para. 11). Although the organization clearly presents influence in the United States' government and agricultural industry, some critics have distinct opposition to the organization, altogether.

### **Criticism of American Farm Bureau Federation**

Although the organization's positive reputation throughout the agricultural industry is apparent, as with many other politically influential organizations, with a political advocacy component of their mission, AFBF has seen distinct criticism throughout its years in operation (Food and Water Watch, 2010). A primary argument to the negative qualities of the organization is the use of vast revenue sources for political influence. Although the organization claims to be bipartisan in its advocacy and legislative power, many have questioned the true nature of this sentiment. Food and Water Watch (2010) explained that the AFBF, although articulating a producer-oriented mindset, has a history of advocating positions that degenerate the industry or don't involve agriculturalists' interests, at all. This poignant narrative is explained by Food and Water Watch (2010) by explaining,

In the nine decades it has been in operation, the number of farms in the United States has dropped from a peak of 7 million to 2 million while the Farm Bureau has amassed a fortune that would stir envy of many corporations, its deep coffers cementing its political influence. How the Farm Bureau is able to maintain its non-profit status with such vast financial reserves and close ties to the insurance industry is a question that deserves fresh review (p. 1).

Another point of contention for critics is the non-partisan assertion of the organization. Although the AFBF claims to be a non-partisan organization, their core philosophy, influence, and political actions suggest otherwise. As explained by Robertson (1982), "although the



government entirely supported Farm Bureau in its infancy, the organization believed in conservative federal government and served as a watchdog over individual freedoms” (p. 15).

The AFBF, although continually declaring nonpartisan affiliation, developed a Christian and outwardly conservative mentality (Sturgis, 1958). Although criticism, poignant and provocative, is relatively easy to find in all aspects of publishing such as academia, government, and social media, the truth of such claims remains inconclusive and highly contested by the organization itself. While backlash and criticism are evident, the AFBF has a history of providing considerable benefits and advantageous programs to its membership.

### **American Farm Bureau Federation Membership**

With a substantial national membership roster, AFBF has established membership rights and obligations (Sturgis, 1958; Robertson, 1982). According to Sturgis (1958), “when you join Farm Bureau you acquire the legal right to share in all of the benefits, opportunities, privileges, and advantages enjoyed by its members” (p. 29).

According to Sturgis (1958), the rights of AFBF members include:

1. To be notified of meetings
2. To receive official Farm Bureau publications
3. To attend meetings
4. To present motions or resolutions for consideration by Farm Bureau members
5. To discuss questions at Farm Bureau meetings and to advocate and work for whatever action you think best
6. To vote
7. To nominate candidates

8. To be a candidate for Farm Bureau office
9. To consult official records of the organization
10. To insist on the enforcement of the rules and procedures of Farm Bureau
11. To share equally in all benefits offered by Farm Bureau (p. 29).

With such benefits associated with membership to AFBF, certain obligations and responsibilities are also required by members (Sturgis, 1958; Robertson, 1982). According to Sturgis (1958), obligations of AFBF members include:

1. To study and vote of Farm Bureau issues
2. To participate in developing Farm Bureau policies
3. To abide by the decisions of the majority of the members
4. To support Farm Bureau policies
5. To carry out duties which may be assigned to you
6. To work in the structure of the organization and according to its policies and rules

### **American Farm Bureau Federation Programming**

Along with political advocacy, the AFBF provides programs for its membership including (a) Young Farmers & Ranchers (YF&R) program, (b) the American Farm Bureau Women's Leadership (AFBWL) program, and (c) Patriot Project (LFBF, n.d.-b). In conjunction with vast professional development programming devoted to agriculturalists and their families, AFBF also provides industry-based financial support for farmers and ranchers (LFBF, n.d.-b). Such agricultural assistance is, most noticeably, offered through state-based farm bureau's insurance benefits such as health, life, travel, auto, home, and farm insurance (LFBF, n.d.-b).

### ***Young Farmers & Ranchers (YF&R) Program***

The AFBF Young Farmers & Ranchers program is a leadership program devoted to agriculturalists, both male and female, from ages 18 to 35 (AFBF, n.d.-f). The mission of this collective is to promote leadership measures to expand and advocate for influential opportunities devoted to the younger agricultural population (AFBF, n.d.-f). The Young Farmers & Ranchers program is aimed to cultivate young agricultural leaders prepared to assume more prominent roles in AFBF in the future (AFBF, n.d.-f).

### **History of Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation**

The Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation (LFBF), “the voice of Louisiana agriculture”, is the statewide chapter of the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF, n.d.-c). Established in 1922, the LFBF was born by way of necessity, much as the AFBF was, in an economically and socially tremulous time. Farmers in Louisiana were beginning to experience the agricultural struggles the rest of the nation was facing in the early 1900s, especially in conjunction with major commodity prices declining. As leaders in the agricultural industry in Louisiana began to seek solutions of these hard economic times, the “formation of the Farm Bureau [in thought began] in Louisiana in 1921” (Robertson, 1982, p. 16). Literature surrounding LFBF, although formally established in 1922 as the statewide bureau of AFBF, suggests that the national AFBF was born through the apparent success of the Cooperative Extension system in Louisiana (Robertson, 1982). According to Robertson (1982),

J. R. Howard stated that Louisiana was really the birthplace of the Farm Bureau though the movement was formally started in Broome County, New York, and spread to the

Midwest, Howard claimed that farmers formally organized around the principle started in Louisiana around 1902” (p. 14-15).

The movement was started in 1902 by the Cooperative Extension Service and was led by Seaman A. Knapp, who dedicated 12 years to developing farming skills with Louisiana families. Knapp revolutionized agricultural education by demonstrating agricultural production methods and technology to producers in the industry. According to Robertson (1982), “it was this movement that spawned the Farm Bureau idea...President Herbert Hoover saw this as a tremendous force and supported the Farm Bureau and Extension” (p. 14-15).

Although, now exhibiting different missions, procedures, and overall objectives, historically, the Cooperative Extension system and AFBF have been allies and mutually collaborative in nature throughout their histories in operation in the United States (Robertson, 1982). From the early efforts of Cooperative Extension, Louisiana farmers began to explore and recognize the benefits of participating in other extension-like programming, such as AFBF (Robertson, 1982). Although there were many concerns surrounding the core organizational principles of the organization, Louisiana’s agricultural industry soon realized the beneficial nature of organizing a state farm bureau in Louisiana (Robertson, 1982). In its infancy, LFBF primary goal was to stimulate the agricultural industry in the state by creating marketing associations to counteract the financial burden of the economic system of this time.

In more recent times, according to Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation (n.d.-c), “The Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation is the state’s largest general farm organization representing farmers, ranchers and rural residents” (LFBF, n.d.-c). From its inauguration in 1922, as a non-profit and non-governmental organization, the LFBF, provides a voice for agriculturalists across the state on influential agricultural topics, legislation, and educational measures (LFBF, n.d.-b).

The LFBF totaled 64,000 members in 1982 (Robertson, 1982). Since then, the LFBF has since increased membership by over 42% to now totaling approximately 150,000 members located across all 64 parishes of the state (LFBF, n.d.-a; Robertson, 1982). According to Robertson (1982), who investigated the history of LFBF in 1982, “it is a work that was very difficult to research and prepare, however, the growth and success of L.F.B.F. is one of the great success stories in agriculture” (p. xvi). The LFBF membership includes “farmers, ranchers, rural residents, landowners, agricultural lenders and others who have a vested interest in the future and prosperity of Louisiana agriculture” (LFBF, n.d.-c). As an organization, LFBF is a non-profit, non-governmental affiliated agency that seeks to bring farmers and ranchers across the state a voice in policy procedures on local, state, and national levels.

### **American Farm Bureau Federation and Cultural Competency**

The American Farm Bureau Federation follows the organizational philosophy of equal opportunity for all members, regardless of race, gender, nationality, education, or socioeconomic status (Sturgis, 1958). Although the conception of the terminology of cultural competency is a new, 21<sup>st</sup> century concept, the AFBF has been practicing culturally competent ideals since its inception as a national organization in 1919.

One distinct characteristic of AFBF that makes the organization culturally and structurally unique is its intentionality to include all members of the agricultural family unit in the organization, including women and young adults. Both women and young adults of AFBF are seen as full, integral members of the organization, not just as auxiliary members. By its intention to include all members of the new, globalized United States social and economic demographics, the AFBF continues to foster culturally competent ideals.

## **History of Cultural Competency**

The historical view of cultural competence is varied and, at times, widely scarce in the contexts in which it is being explored (Gallus et al., 2014). Through previous research, it is concluded that the idea of cultural competence was born from the necessity for individuals to operate appropriately in: (a) a globalized economy, (b) an environment of changing United States' population demographics, and (c) a gaining public popularity of multicultural education (Hains et al., 2000; Suh, 2004).

### **A Need for Cultural Competency in a Globalized Economy**

The nature of the globalized economy of the United States and the world has developed a conducive atmosphere for the development and progression of cultural competency in multiple industries. As explained by Kottak (2010), "Cultures are not haphazard collections of customs and beliefs. Cultures are integrated, patterned systems. If one part of the system [e.g., the economy] changes, other parts change as well" (p. 29). The ideal of globalization has been extensively developed to comprehensively understand and define the concept in society (Al-Rodhan & Stoudmann, 2006). Some scholars debate that defining the term would be inaccurate and would inadequately articulate the various dimensions that encompass a broad concept such as globalization (Al-Rodhan & Stoudmann, 2006). Although many scholars have struggled to define this seemingly vague concept, Al-Rodhan and Stoudmann (2006) defined globalization as, "a process that encompasses the causes, course, and consequences of transnational and transcultural integration of human and non-human activities" (p. 2).

Because of this broad terminology, the concept of globalization can be categorized and executed in a variety of industrial contexts, such as agriculture (Al-Rodhan & Stoudmann, 2006).

Through its focus on increased global involvement, globalization has greatly progressed the concept of cultural competence as an obligatory skill for all professionals in globalized environments. Furthermore, globalization has allowed cultural competence to establish itself in research, academia, healthcare, and business. As explained by Grant et al. (2020), “As technology continues to advance in an increasingly diverse global market, the need for culturally competent graduates entering the workforce is more vital than ever” (p. 52). With a globalized economy increasingly present and thriving in the United States, the population of the country has shifted to represent the new globalized economic requirements of the United States’ workforce (Grant et. Al, 2020).

### **Changing Population Demographics**

Due to the economic momentum for professionals to operate in globalized environments, the population demographics of the United States vastly began to change to accommodate more internationally connected social and professional market. Hains et al. (2000) stated:

Researchers project that by the year 2080, most Americans will be from culturally and linguistically diverse populations, and Hispanics will comprise the largest cohort. While the U.S. population is becoming more diverse, the educators, social service, and health professionals in early intervention programs most often are white, college-educated women. If these trends persist, early intervention professionals and families will increasingly encounter cultural, linguistic, racial, economic, and class differences. (para., 19)

These trends have clearly persisted, as evidence through the increase in literature focused on the investigation of cultural competence as it relates to business, research, Cooperative

Extension, and academic environments. Fox et al. (2017) explained how the future of agricultural businesses and organizations is dependent on the agricultural workforce's ability to respond to globalized demographic shifts. The changing demographics, by means of an increased volume of racial, ethnic, and additional minority groups are now represented in all aspects of the United States workforce. Further, changing demographics have prompted other vital aspects of United States' society, such as education and Cooperative Extension, to integrate a variety of inclusive perspectives to meet the needs of the new demography of the country and the world (Bennett, 2001). One such educational movement, known as multicultural education, has fostered the notion of adequately educating all populations present in the United States, in regard to their race, ethnicity, gender, and native language.

### **Multicultural Education**

Increasing ethnic and racial diversity in the United States has led to changing demographics in the United States. Therefore, cultural competency is often described as having similar goals to those of multicultural education (Bennett, 2001). Multicultural education has been defined by Banks and McGee Banks (2010) as,

A process whose major goal is to change the structure of educational institutions so that male and female students, exceptional students, and students who are members of diverse racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups will have an equal chance to achieve academically in school (p. 1).

Multicultural education began with the rise of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s (Banks & McGee Banks, 2010; Bennett, 2001; Gorski, 1999). During this time, individuals from different ethnic, racial, and minority groups, including African-Americans and



women, rallied for systematic integration of equitable educational measures such as curriculum reformation, as well as additional resources and personnel to meet the needs of diverse minority groups (Banks & McGee Banks, 2010; Bennett, 2001; Gorski, 1999). From the development of multicultural education, the idea of cultural competence emerged as an essential principle for individuals to appropriately operate and thrive in multicultural circumstances (Bennett, 2001). Through the initial foundation framed by multicultural education, globalization, and shifting demographics, cultural competency has been recognized as a requirement of all areas of the United States' way of life, including legislation.

### **United States' Legislation Affecting Cultural Competence Progression**

Although cultural competency is a relatively new concept of research and political interest, legislation throughout the history of the United States has, unknowingly, progressed the ideal of cultural competence. Historically, formalized legislation has progressed a societal shift to a widespread, more culturally competent nation. Furthermore, De Leon Siantz and Meleis (2007) suggested that "public policies and partnerships...must be developed at the highest levels to create systems of change through academic, community, hospital, federal, and funding alliances" (p. 89). Such influential academic, community, and federal legislation and political movements in the United States include (a) the Civil Rights Movement, (b) the Civil Rights Acts, (c) Fair Employment Act of 1941, (d) Brown v. Board of Education, © Religious Land Use and Institutional Persons Act, and (f) Voting Rights Act of 1965. These pieces of legislations drastically revolutionized the face of the United States political, economic, demographical, and education system. Through steady progression, these landmark legislations set the foundation for the progression of cultural competency, even before its prominence in United States' society.

## Legislation 1860-1900

Numerous legislative rulings passed during 1860 to 1900 were directly resulting from the occurrence and reparations of the Civil War in the United States. The American Civil War was a brutal, four-year war, from 1861 to 1865, between the Northern United States, the Union, and the Southern United States, the Confederacy (Foner, 1974). There have been many speculated historical causes of the Civil War, including the rights of individual states and slavery (Foner, 1974). Due to the racial and social conflict associated with the Civil War, the legislation of this time furthered the standard of cultural competency long before the idea was a formalized concept. Such legislation includes, as depicted in Table 1, (a) the Civil Rights Act of 1866, (b) the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, (c) the Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, (d) the Civil Rights Act of 1871, and © the Civil Rights Act of 1875.

Table 1  
Legislation Progressing Cultural Competence in the United States 1860-1900

Legislation	Date	Description
Civil Rights Act of 1866	1866	Defined the standards of citizenship in the United States and was the first legislation in Congress to address civil rights.
Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution	1866	Prohibits United States citizens from the infringement of life, liberty, or property without due process of law.
Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution	1870	Prohibits state and federal level government from forbidding United States' citizens to vote based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude.
Civil Rights Act of 1871	1871	Prohibits race motivated violence, perpetrated by individuals or organizations, against African-Americans.
Civil Rights Act of 1875	1875	Affirmed the "equality of all men before the law" and prohibited racial discrimination in public places and facilities such as restaurants, public transportation, and hotels.

The Civil Rights Act of 1866 advanced cultural competency through its efforts to formalize and define requirements for United States' citizenship (Civil Rights Act of 1866, 1866). This legislation was the first civil rights legislation ever addressed in the Congress of the United States (Civil Rights Act of 1866, 1866). The standards for United States' citizenship, as defined by the Civil Rights Act of 1866, include all individuals who are born in the United States (Civil Rights Act of 1866, 1866). According to the Civil Rights Act of 1866 (1866) this legislation did not consider Native Americans as citizens; however, this policy did establish the Native American population as equitable to the benefits of United States laws (Civil Rights Act of 1866, 1866).

In the same year, 1866, the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the United States Constitution (Amendment XIV) was passed to assure equitable protection measures for all United States citizens, furthering the ideal of cultural competency (U.S. Const. amend. XIV). By,

Forc[ing] a state to govern impartially—not draw distinctions between individuals solely on differences that are irrelevant to a legitimate governmental objective. Thus, the equal protection clause is crucial to the protection of civil rights” (U.S. Const. amend. XIV).

Amendment XIV has been extensively cited in controversial landmark civil rights cases such as *Brown v. Board of Education* which addressed racial discrimination and *University of California v. Bakke* which reviewed racial quotas in education (U.S. Const. amend. XIV). The Fourteenth Amendment was influential in addressing discrimination and racial disparities in United States legislation further fostering a culturally competent mindset on a widespread, national scale.

The Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, passed in 1870, prohibits all states from discriminating voting rights to United States citizens based on “race, color, or previous condition of servitude” (U.S. Const. amend. XV). This amendment allowed people who were previously considered slaves to vote in U.S. elections of political officials (U.S. Const. amend. XV). This legislation set a precedence to further cultural competency by allowing all citizens, if they are of age, to express their voting rights in the democratic system of the United States. One year later, in 1871, the Civil Rights Act of 1871 was passed to outlaw any violence towards African-Americans based on race. This legislation was monumental in battling white supremacist organizations, such as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), across the United States, but most significantly in the former Confederate states in the South (Civil Rights Act of 1871, 1871). These national efforts to further disband and abolish all racial hate groups strengthened the case for cultural competency in the early stages following the Civil War.

In 1875, legislation was passed to counteract racial discrimination in the United States. The Civil Rights Act of 1875 established universal access to public establishments including public transportation, theaters, hotel accommodations, and public parks, for all citizens of the United States regardless of their race or color (Civil Rights Act of 1875, 1875). This legislation also stated the prohibition of such rights was considered unlawful and the victim of such would receive federal restitution (Civil Rights Act of 1875, 1875).

## **Legislation 1940-1990**

In the early 1900s, progress to cultural competency did not take shape as formalized legislation. It was not until industrialization took hold in United States' economy that formalized legislation, indirectly furthering cultural competency, was passed throughout the nation. Table 2 depicts the chronological legislation that was implemented to promote cultural competency in the United States.

Table 2  
Legislation Progressing Cultural Competence in the United States 1940-1990

Legislation	Date	Description
Executive Order 8802 "Fair Employment Act of 1941"	1941	Prohibited employment discrimination by federal agencies, unions, and companies involved in war efforts and was the first federal action to promote equal opportunity and prohibit employment discrimination in the United States.  This legislation also established the Fair Employment Practices Commission.
Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas "Brown I"	1954	Stated that segregation in public schools solely based on race is unconstitutional.
Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas II "Brown II"	1955	Stated that schools should, especially in the South, must comply with Brown I "with all deliberate speed".
Civil Rights Act of 1957	1957	First significant civil rights legislation passed since the Reconstruction of the United States following the Civil War.  Established the Civil Rights Commission and the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Justice Department to investigate possible cases of voting rights infringement.
Executive Order 10925 "Affirmative Action Act"	1961	Required equal opportunity and affirmative action programs in all federal agencies.
Civil Rights Act of 1964	1964	Outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, and later sexual orientation and gender identity.

(table cont'd.)

Legislation	Date	Description
Executive Order 11246 “Equal Employment Opportunity Act”	1965	Provided affirmative action and equal opportunity to employment practices in the United States government.
Voting Rights Act of 1965	1965	Enforced the Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution to prohibit racial discrimination in voting practices, especially in the South.
Civil Rights Act of 1968 “Fair Housing Act”	1968	Provided for equal housing opportunities for U.S. citizens regardless of race, religion, or national origin and prohibited injury and intimidation procedures in housing practices.
Equal Credit Opportunity Act	1974	Prohibits creditors from discrimination against credit customers based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, or because an applicant participates in a public assistance program.
Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act “Stafford Act”	1988	Established equal and fair relief operations during a federally declared national disaster or emergency, without discrimination of race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, or economic status.

Executive Order Number 8802, also known as the Fair Employment Act of 1941, was instituted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to prohibit all discrimination by federal agencies, unions, and companies that were involved in war-related efforts in the defense of the United States (Exec. Order No. 8802, 1941). Implemented during the height of World War II, this legislation allowed organizations to actively hire any citizen of the United States, and subsequently, increase the organization’s capacity to produce war-related essential commodities (Exec. Order No. 8802, 1941). Executive Order Number 8802 also established the Fair Employment Committee, a federal organization whose sole responsibility is to investigate instances of employment discrimination (Exec. Order No. 8802, 1941).

Another foundational legislative piece that has profoundly affected the progression of cultural competency in the United States were the U. S. Supreme Court Cases, *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Brown v. Board of Education II*, addressed in 1954 and 1955, respectively (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954; Brown v. Board of Education II, 1955). The Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas (Brown I) case cited that segregation in the United States public education system was inherently unconstitutional based on the equal protection clause in the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, establishing life liberty, and property for all United States citizens, with education being a core element in the *life* component of that clause (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954). Although Brown I began the initial desegregation process of the United States education system, the subsequent Supreme Court case, Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas II (Brown II), proceeded to create a formalized plan to desegregate schools, especially in the South (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954; Brown v. Board of Education II, 1955). Therefore, establishing that segregated schools were unconstitutional and were to be integrated, as soon as possible (Brown v. Board of Education II, 1955).

Shortly following Brown I and Brown II, the Civil Rights Act of 1957 was passed through the United States legislative branch to establish the Civil Rights Commission and the Civil Rights Division in the U.S Justice Department (Civil Rights Act of 1957, 1957). The Civil Rights Act of 1957, “marked the first occasion since Reconstruction that the federal government undertook significant legislative action to protect civil rights” (Civil Rights Act of 1957, 1957, para. 1). Through the establishment of the Civil Rights Commission, the United States government was able to formally investigate any incidents of infringement on the voting rights of citizens (Civil Rights Act of 1957, 1957). This legislation is significant in the battle for widespread cultural competency, as it set a precedence of an increasing federal support and

dedication to further the civil rights and dignities of all people in the United States (Civil Rights Act of 1957, 1957).

As the United States' population became increasingly involved in the Civil Rights Movement from 1954 to 1970, subsequent federal legislation was passed to meet the demand for increased attention to the civil rights of all citizens of the United States (Civil Rights Act of 1964). Signed into action by President John F. Kennedy (JFK) in 1961, Executive Order 10925, later known as the Affirmative Action Act, established a formalized process for governmental agencies and contractors to “take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin”(Exec. Order No. 10925, 1961). This legislation was established to promote antidiscrimination throughout the United States government (Exec. Order No. 10925, 1961). Executive Order 10925 also presented a system to prosecute individuals, organizations, and business that violate this decree (Exec. Order No. 10925, 1961)

Shortly following Executive Order 10925, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, one of the most recognizable civil rights legislations was passed to, “prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin” (Civil Rights Act of 1964, 1964). Provisions of this civil rights act forbade discrimination in the hiring, promoting, and firing of employees (Civil Rights Act of 1964, 1964). The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is considered a benchmark legislation in the United State and was widely cited in landmark cases regarding civil rights and racial discrimination. Additionally, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 has continued to influence the social culture of respecting the “life, liberty, or property” of United States citizens, as represented in the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution (Civil Rights Act of 1964, U.S. Const. amend. XIV).



Continuing with the momentum from the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the United States' federal government enacted the Voting Rights Act of 1965, prohibiting discrimination in voting, especially in the South (Voting Rights Act of 1965, 1965). This legislation was passed to enforce the Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, previously enacted in 1870, to enforce the right to vote for all United States citizens, including African-Americans and former slaves (Voting Rights Act of 1965, 1965). Although African-Americans and former slaves had the legislative right to vote, they faced immense hurdles when voting, such as poll taxes, literacy tests, violence, and harassment (Voting Rights Act of 1965). Due to the social implications of expressing their right to vote, many African-American and former slaves were not registered and active in the election process (Voting Rights Act of 1965).

Although the Fifteenth Amendment was intended to create a protection of voting rights for all people, it was not until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was passed 95 years after, when that sentiment became an enforceable reality across the entire country (Voting Rights Act of 1965, 1965). According to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (1965), "By the end of 1965, a quarter of a million new black voters had been registered, one-third by Federal examiners. By the end of 1966, only 4 out of the 13 southern states had fewer than 50 percent of African Americans registered to vote" (para. 5).

Continually shifting to a more inclusive population, in 1965, Executive Order 11246, also known as Equal Employment Opportunity Act, was signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson. Executive Order 11246 "requires affirmative action and prohibits federal contractors from discriminating on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or national origin" (para. 1). Additionally, this order also prohibited contractors' possible

discrimination against individuals for discussing their compensation measures, and the compensation of others.

Shifting into the climax of the Civil Rights Movement in 1968, socially motivated legislation, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1968, also known as the Fair Housing Act, was passed (Civil Rights Act of 1968, 1968). The Civil Rights Act of 1968 was ratified following the assassination of influential, world renown Civil Rights activist, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (Civil Rights Act of 1968, 1968). With societal upheaval at possibly the highest and most intense level since the Civil War, the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (1968) “makes it unlawful to refuse to sell, rent to, or negotiate with any person because of that person’s inclusion in a protected class. The goal is a unitary housing market in which a person’s background (as opposed to financial resources) does not arbitrarily restrict access” (para. 2). Although this act produced advances in the progression of fair housing, it was not until later in United States history, and subsequent legislative action, where that ideal became a reality (Civil Rights Act of 1968, 1968).

Shortly following the societally recognized conclusion of the Civil Rights Movement in 1970, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act was passed as a federal statute in 1974 to, “prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, receipt of public assistance, or good faith exercise of any rights under the Consumer Credit Protection Act” (Equal Credit Opportunity Act, 1974, para. 1). The Consumer Credit Protection Act, passed in 1968, aimed to counteract the misuse of financial records in banks in the United States, as well as, ensuring creditors disclose the reasoning behind denying credit opportunities to consumers (Consumer Credit Protection Act, 1968). The Equal Credit Opportunity Act furthered the scope of antidiscrimination, initially established by the Consumer Credit Protection

Act, for United States citizens operating, in any form with the financial industry (Consumer Credit Protection Act, 1968; Equal Credit Opportunity Act, 1974).

Progressing to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the idea of cultural competence was developed on a strong foundation of the aforementioned legislations, yet cultural competence was still in conceptual infancy in the United States. One legislative measure that indirectly progressed cultural competence in an unconventional manner is the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, also known as the Stafford Act, passed in 1988 (Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 1988). The Stafford Act established a federal obligation to aid states during a major disaster or emergency, as the disaster or emergency has been formally declared by the President of the United States (Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 1988). This federal assistance is carried out through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), a federally centralized organization that facilitates federal emergency resource allocation across the United States during national crisis disasters (Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 1988). The Stafford Act established equal and fair relief procedures during a federally declared national disaster or emergency, without discrimination based on race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, or economic status (Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 1988).

### **Legislation 1990-2000s**

As societal, educational, and governmental environments shifted to meet the needs of the United States through the turn of the millennium, cultural competence legislation took form in more specialized areas of United States life, as depicted chronologically, in Table 3.

Table 3

## Legislation Progressing Cultural Competence in the United States 1990-2000s

Legislation	Date	Description
Civil Rights Act of 1991	1991	Furthered the illegality of discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in any form and provides a process to attain damages in cases of intentional discrimination. The Glass Ceiling Commission was established to investigate and recommend action in the reasoning women and minorities were excluded from higher-level business and management positions.
Executive Order 13166	2000	Required federal agencies to examine the services they provide to identify any areas that need to be amended to accommodate those with limited English proficiency (LEP) and develop procedures and programs to address this need.
Religious Land Use and Institutional Persons Act	2000	Protects individuals, houses of worship, and other religious institutions from discrimination in zoning and landmarking. Protects the religious rights of inmates and other persons confined to institutions.

The Civil Rights Act of 1991 began legislative recognition and action regarding racial, ethnic, and gender minority underrepresentation in elite management positions in the United States (Civil Rights Act of 1991, 1991). The Civil Rights Act of 1991 further enforced the illegal nature of discrimination in United States' society, as previously affirmed by preceding federal statutes such as the Civil Rights Act of 1866, the Civil Rights Act of 1875, and the Fair Employment Act of 1941 (Civil Rights Act of 1991, 1991). Additionally, the Civil Rights Act of 1991 established the Glass Ceiling Commission, a governmental organization that investigated the underrepresentation of women and minority groups in high level business and management positions in the United States (Civil Rights Act of 1991, 1991). Further, the Glass Ceiling Commission was tasked with making recommendations to remedy the lack of representation, a

sentiment that is still being socially, educationally, and professionally fostered in business and management today (Civil Rights Act of 1991, 1991).

In 2000, President Bill Clinton, instituted Executive Order 13166, which established programs in the government to provide funding assistance to institute services for non-native English speakers (Exec. Order No. 13166, 2000, p. 50121). In the same year, the Religious Land Use and Institutional Persons Act (RLUIPA) passed to “protect individuals, houses of worship, and other religious institutions from discrimination in zoning and landmarking laws” (Religious Land Use and Institutional Persons Act [RLUIPA], 2000, para. 1). As a more definitive, clear view of what cultural competency now entailed in United States’ society, this federal statute provided a framework for culturally competent legislation in a new aged, globalized society.

Each legislative act passed in the United States government over the past three centuries that has, directly or indirectly, reflected the progression of culturally competent legislative ideals. Culturally competent ideals such as cultural awareness, knowledge, and sensitivity, although legislatively advanced, were not comprehensibly socially established throughout the United States. However, institutions of learning have recognized the legislative effort and, subsequently, initiated a demand to cultivate a culturally competent mindset in all aspects of American citizen’s lives including professional life, educational life, and social life. Historically, culturally competent legislation, as previously described, advances the demand for culturally competent educational measures and resources.

### **Cultivating Cultural Competence**

Much as other elements of cultural competence, the methods of cultivation of culturally competent skills, attitudes, and behaviors is often seen as inconclusive. Scholarly research has

been unable to empirically synthesize an inclusive catalog of cultural competencies that are vital to success in the United States and the globalized economy. Therefore, more research is required to understand the conceptualization of cultural competency and the fundamental knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with such a varied concept in a professional setting (Gallus et al., 2014).

### **Professional Development**

From a professional development perspective, a lack of relevant literature deters the development of essential competencies in organizational members across professional contexts (Gallus et al., 2014). Although conceptual overlap is present, there is not an empirically based, comprehensive list of essential cultural competencies that professionals need to achieve success in diverse work environments. Because of this, agencies are left to speculate and construct lists of competencies that may be most relevant to their organizational goals.

For instance, in healthcare, Seeleman et al. (2009) acknowledges that many educational efforts have been made to promote cultural competence in medical education and training, yet training assessments and materials are lacking integration and unity due to lack of fluency among individuals teaching and developing such curricula. This idea has been resonated throughout healthcare research (Horvat et al., 2014, Kirmayer, 2012; Suh, 2004; Wells, 2000). The general convergence of literature has suggested the following skills as vital cultural competencies: (a) the ability to care for culturally diverse patients, (b) being open and respectful of other cultures, and (c) demonstrating flexibility or adaptiveness dependent on diverse cultural circumstances (Horvat et al., 2014, Seeleman et al., 2009; Suh, 2004; Wells, 2000).

However, in a military context, vital cultural competencies include language proficiency, culturally specific knowledge, prior international experience, extraversion, emotional stability, self-monitoring, and mindfulness (Abbe, 2008; Abbe et al., 2008). Abbe (2008) described the need for the development of various cultural competencies in the United States DoD, such as cultural knowledge, language proficiency, and cultural adaptivity.

### **Formal Education**

In institutions of higher education, cultural competence is viewed as critical to the development of graduates as they are preparing to address the globalized social issues they face upon graduation and entering the agricultural workforce. Grant et al. (2020) stated,

Because colleges and universities are responsible for educating students and preparing them for workforce entry, faculty and administration should not only understand their important role in cultural competence development, but also take action to ensure all students are equipped with the necessary skills to navigate an increasingly technological and diverse world (p. 61).

One of the most popular approaches for higher education institutions aiming to develop culturally competent graduates is through study abroad courses (Bunch et al., 2018; Dudas, 2012; Mikhaylov, 2014; Treleaven et al., 2007). The establishment of study abroad courses has become a common fixture across U.S. institutions and internationally. With the quantity and quality of study abroad courses continually becoming more rigorous and complex, study abroad programs have begun to take precedence in the academic community.

## **Study Abroad**

A plethora of research has been devoted to exploring and explaining student motivations, barriers, and impacts of study abroad courses. There is also a large quantity of research dedicated to parental perceptions and influences of student participants in study abroad courses. Higher education institutions have dedicated a growing quantity of resources devoted to study abroad design, facilitation, and research.

Cultural competence has been found to be cultivated through participation in international study abroad experiences (Bunch et al., 2018; Dudas, 2012; Mikhaylov, 2014; Rampold et al., 2020; Treleaven et al., 2007). Through exposure to diverse international cultures, participants of both short-term and long-term study abroad experiences are more likely to have gained cultural competency than their student peers who have not participated (Bunch et al., 2018, Rampold et al., 2020). This use of study abroad courses to increase cultural competency in participants has been demonstrated throughout literature in many different educational contexts, such as science, engineering, technology, and mathematics (STEM), agriculture, business, and healthcare (Bunch et al., 2018; Dudas, 2012; Mikhaylov, 2014; Rampold et al., 2020; Treleaven et al., 2007).

### **Cultural Competence Assessment Instruments**

There have been many assessment instruments developed to measure the level and progression of cultural competency. In general, assessments of cultural competence are developed for utilization in specific industrial contexts and implemented at the organizational and consumer level (Center of Excellence for Cultural Competence, 2010). Such assessment instruments are often difficult to validate and administer due to the varied, inconclusive



definitions of what constitutes cultural competencies in various globalized environments in the United States' workforce. Although inconclusive as such a list may be, researchers have devoted prodigious resources for the assessment and progression of cultural competency in individuals, organizations, and society, as a whole.

### **Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)**

One cultural competence instrument that is well-cited and validated throughout cultural competence literature is the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) developed by Hammer et al. (2003). This 50-item assessment is aimed to model how an individual, in any professional context, can progress from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism (Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Fabregas-Janeiro, 2011; Hammer et al., 2003). This continuum is modeled in through the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, which constituted the conceptual framework for the development of the IDI (Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Fabregas-Janeiro, 2011; Hammer et al., 2003).

Ethnocentrism is the ideal that, “one’s own culture is experienced as central to reality in some way” (Bennett & Bennett, 2004, p. 14). In essence, ethnocentrism is demonstrated when an individual views other cultures through their own personal cultural lens and denies, raises question to, or dismisses the significance of cultural diversity (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). Ethnocentrism behaviors and attitudes are considered to focus on “avoiding cultural differences” (Bennett & Bennett, 2004, p. 14). Whereas ethnorelativism is the ideal that, “one’s own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures” (Bennett & Bennett, 2004, p. 14). Essentially, ethnorelativism is demonstrated when an individual views other cultures as valid and essential in their social and professional environment through accepting, adapting to, and integrating accommodations to culturally diverse individuals and atmospheres (Bennett & Bennett, 2004).

Ethnorelativism behaviors and attitudes are considered to be focused on “seeking cultural differences” (Bennett & Bennett, 2004, p. 14).

### **California Brief Multicultural Assessment Scale (CBMAS)**

The California Brief Multicultural Assessment Scale (CBMAS) is a cultural competence assessment instrument developed from the foundation of the IDI, as well as, other established scales for utilization in the counseling and psychology profession (Center of Excellence for Cultural Competence, 2010; Gamst et al., 2004). This 21-item cultural competency assessment is measured at an organizational level, thereby, allowing the scoring to be generalizable to the organization, as a whole (Center of Excellence for Cultural Competence, 2010; Gamst et al., 2004). The CBMAS measures cultural competency through cultural knowledge, cultural sensitivity, cultural awareness, and non-ethnic abilities. Non-ethnic abilities consist of operating in culturally diverse populations who may not be considered ethnically diverse depending on the circumstances, such as LGBTQ+, individuals with exceptionalities, and senior citizens (Center of Excellence for Cultural Competence, 2010; Gamst et al., 2004). The attention to cultural competence in nonethnic groups is one unique component of the CBMAS which is not included in many other cultural competence instruments (Gamst et al., 2004).

### **Conceptual Framework**

The Winters Group (n.d.) Cultural Competence Model™ described the stages an individual should endure to reach and maintain cultural competence. Consequently, the four-stage model is a linear process and as an individual evolves through the linear continuum, they conduct a series of internal, self-reflective analyses at each phase. The four components of this model are cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, cultural sensitivity, and cultural competence

(Winters Group, n.d.). This framework was chosen because of the individualized nature of the model. For instance, in the present study, I aimed to understand the cultural competence of members of the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers and Ranchers.

It is vital to note that progression through this model is consequential in nature, thus dependent on the individual's advancement throughout each phase. An individual cannot progress to the next phase without completing all phases preceding it. For example, an individual cannot move to the cultural knowledge, without first completing cultural awareness. Therefore, once reaching cultural competence, an individual would be considered culturally aware, knowledgeable, sensitive, and competent.

During the first stage of cultural awareness, an individual begins to question their own beliefs, values, and cultural norms, as well as the beliefs, values, and cultural norms of other cultures (Bunch et al., 2018; Rampold et al., 2020, Winters Group, n.d). Essentially, this stage is an inquisitive phase of validating one's own culture and the cultures of others (Bunch et al., 2018; Winters Group, n.d). Once an individual has accomplished this, they move to cultural knowledge.

During cultural knowledge, an individual begins to deeply analyze the differences between their culture and the culture of others (Bunch et al., 2018; Winters Group, n.d). In essence, an individual begins to look for deeper connections and juxtaposes components of their culture to that of others (Bunch et al., 2018; Winters Group, n.d). Further, through this analysis of knowledge, an individual begins to realize what subsequent knowledge and understanding is needed to better comprehend cultures they do not identify with, as well as their own cultural identity (Bunch et al., 2018; Winters Group, n.d).

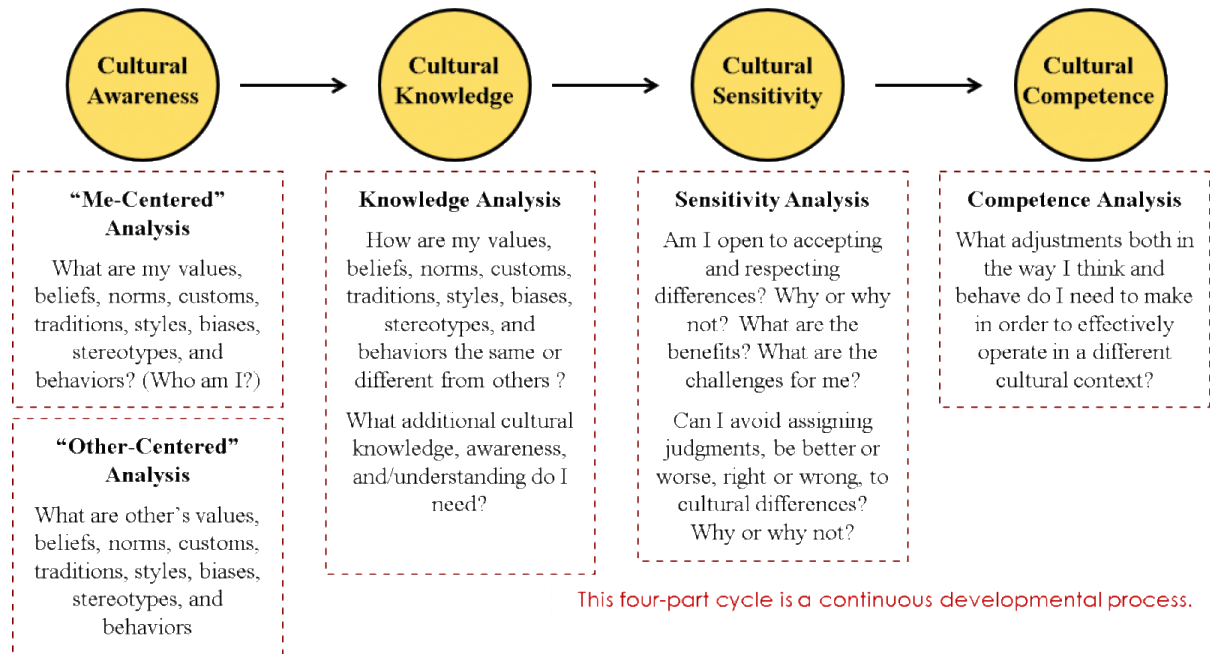
Once an individual is culturally knowledgeable, they advance to cultural sensitivity. In cultural sensitivity, an individual begins to analyze his or her own personal abilities such as whether they are accepting, openminded, and tolerant of others' cultural beliefs, values, and norms (Bunch et al., 2018; Winters Group, n.d). In this phase, therefore, the aim is for an individual to assess their own ability to function and work respectfully and ethically in a system where other cultures are present (Bunch et al., 2018; Winters Group, n.d).

Once an individual progresses through the cultural sensitivity, they move to the fixed stage of cultural competence. This is the final phase in which an individual determines that ongoing modifications are required in their life to maintain a culturally competent personal and professional lifestyle (Bunch et al., 2018; Winters Group, n.d). Once an individual reaches this phase of cultural competence, they will maintain this stage if continual analysis is conducted regarding their awareness, knowledge, and sensitivity toward other cultures (Bunch et al., 2018; Winters Group, n.d).

**Figure 1.**

*Winters Group Cultural Competence Model™*

# Cultural Competence Model™



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## Summary

When synthesizing the scholarship regarding the integrated conceptual and legislative basis for cultural competency in the agricultural industry, the integration of both concepts in the U.S. can be viewed as inconclusive and vague. The agricultural industry, mainly educational organizations, such as American Farm Bureau Federation and Cooperative Extension, have, historically, seen great success in ingraining systematic measures of cultural competence in the daily operation of the organizations. Specifically, the AFBF has a wide variety of programming and benefits that are designed to be completely inclusive for all members across the country, regardless of race, gender, and many other distinct components of culture. Although cultural competency progression has been indirectly fostered throughout the last three centuries of the United States' legislative history, the concept has not seen direct formalized progression in all

areas of life. Cultural competency, although marginally fostered through legislation, has been most advanced through societal and educational movements such as the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement.

Although cultural competency, itself, is a relatively new conception of research and political interest, legislation throughout the history of the United States has, unknowingly, progressed the ideal of cultural competence. Historically, formalized legislation has progressed a societal shift to a culture of a more inclusive, diverse nation. In recent national history, cultural competence has been progressed in conceptualization through education, government, and business through increasing amounts of globalization, changing national population demographics, and a demand for integrated multicultural education throughout the United States' education system.

The historical view of cultural competence is varied and, at times, widely scarce in contexts such as Cooperative Extension and agriculture (Gallus et al., 2014). Through empirical research, it can be concluded that the idea of cultural competence was born from the necessity for individuals to operate appropriately in: (a) a globalized economy, (b) an environment of changing United States' population demographics, and (c) a gaining public popularity of multicultural education (Hains, Lynch, & Winston, 2000; Suh, 2004).

Historically, culturally competent legislation advances the demand for culturally competent educational measures and resources. Much like other elements of cultural competence, the methods of cultivation of culturally competent skills, attitudes, and behaviors is often seen as inconclusive. Scholarly research has been unable to empirically synthesize an inclusive catalog of cultural competencies that are vital to success in the United States' and international globalized economy. Therefore, more research is required to understand the

conceptualization of cultural competency and the fundamental knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with such a varied concept in a professional setting (Gallus et al., 2014). However, academia, research, and business have begun implementing measures to assess and progress the cultural competency levels of individuals who operate in the globalized, culturally diverse setting of today's economy.

Such assessment instruments are often developed for use in specific industrial contexts and implemented at the organizational and consumer level (Center of Excellence for Cultural Competence, 2010). However, these instruments are difficult to validate and administer due to the varied, inconclusive findings of what constitutes cultural competencies fundamental to various globalized environments in the U.S. workforce. As inconclusive as such a list may be, researchers have devoted prodigious resources for the assessment and progression of cultural competency in individuals, organizations, and society. This resource allocation often takes form as professional development or study abroad coursework, both of which, have been empirically discovered to increase cultural competence level in participants of such programming.

## **CHAPTER III. METHODS**

### **Overview**

This investigation addressed the cultural competence in the young agriculturalists through rigorous, ethical, and credible methodology. Using an interpretive philosophical perspective, I employed an instrumental case study design to derive emergent themes.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to understand how young agriculturalist understood and experienced cultural competence in Louisiana.

### **Research Question**

One research question guided this investigation:

1. What was the cultural competence of young agricultural leaders in Louisiana?

### **Philosophical Perspective**

To interpret the data accurately, the philosophical foundation of this qualitative investigation must be disclosed and discussed. Addressing epistemological and theoretical viewpoints throughout the research process is essential to illustrate the significance my interpretation of the study's findings. In particular, the epistemological and theoretical perspective of a researcher has the ability to alter the interpretation of data and alter the findings. Consequentially, researchers with varying philosophical perspectives will have different interpretations of data. Below is a description of the epistemological and theoretical perspective I used to ground my decision-making in this investigation.



## **Epistemology and Theoretical Perspective**

For the purpose of this investigation, I viewed and interpreted data using a constructionist epistemological perspective (Crotty, 1998). Constructionism focused on how individuals construct meaning based on their lived experiences in a given context (Crotty, 1998). A constructionist perspective, at its core, is not a constructed meaning until an individual interacts and interprets the world around them (Crotty, 1998). As such, an individual's meaning of reality is intentionally constructed through their interpretation of the world around them (Crotty, 1998). Kynigos (2015) explained how constructionism aims to assign meaning naturally through various aspects of the research participants' environment. In this investigation, the epistemological lens influenced all phases of the research process. Therefore, I viewed the data and the topic of culture from participants' reconstructed realities regarding the subject of cultural competency.

I also employed the interpretivist theoretical perspective when approaching this investigation. Interpretivism is a theoretical perspective by which an individual interprets the world around them through the historical and cultural context of their interactions with society (Crotty, 1998). This perspective was ideal for this investigation because of the critical role of social context in the cultural experiences of participants (Crotty, 1998).

## **Reflexivity**

To accurately represent the research findings, an explanation of my biases and experiences regarding cultural competency and the data should be addressed. I am an advocate of culturally competent systems and the progression of culturally competent ideals in agriculture including education, production, and business. I also value cultural competence as a concept,

educational goal, and professional development goal. Additionally, I have conducted, analyzed, and written various research studies on culturally competent development measures in education, such as study abroad courses. It is also critical to understand that these factors may have influenced my interpretation of data to favor the continued establishment and progression of cultural competence in agricultural industry. To reduce these influences, I employed Tracy's (2010) model for excellent qualitative research in all stages of the research process.

### **Institutional Review Board**

This investigation was conducted in alignment with procedural, situational, relational, and ethical standards and approved by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB), an organization who ensures the physical and emotional safety, health, and privacy of subjects who participate in a scholarly research study. With the added challenge of conducting research in a global pandemic, physical safety modifications such as conducting interviews virtually, had to be arranged at the beginning of the investigation for participants and researchers.

Verbal and written consent were obtained from participants before any data were collected. All data, including interview audio files, interview transcripts, and interview notes, were kept confidential. Additionally, the data regarding this study will be destroyed five years after completion of the project, in accordance with IRB standards, to enhance additional security.

### **Instrumental Case Study Research Design**

This qualitative investigation was grounded in Stake's (1995) instrumental case study approach. Stake (1994) defined an instrumental case study as an investigation whereby, "a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory" (p. 237). Or as Stake (1994) explained,

Case study can [also] be a disciplined force in public policy setting and reflection on human experience. Vicarious experience is an important basis for refining action options and expectations...The purpose of case study is not to represent the world, but represent the case” (p. 245).

For the purpose of this investigation, I examined the case to provide insight into the topic of cultural competence of young agriculturalists in Louisiana. In accordance with Stake’s (1995) approach, this investigation was bound by program, place, and time. For example, the participants in this study were members of the Young Farmers and Ranchers program Executive Board in the state of Louisiana in 2020-2021. Stake (1995) suggested instrumental case study approach was most beneficial through a limited quantity of research questions. As such, the singular question guided this investigation. Using this research question, I created a semi-structured interview protocol. Before conducting the interview, I obtained informed consent through written consent and verbal confirmation.

### **Background of the Study**

I selected the population of interest because they were heavily engaged in production agriculture in Louisiana. Agriculture in the state is thriving with over 27,400 farms in operation in 2019 (United States Department of Agriculture [USDA] National Agricultural Statistics Service [NASS], n.d.). In 2019, there were over 8 million acres of land used as farmland in Louisiana (USDA NASS, n.d.). Farmers and ranchers produce numerous distinct commodities, with the highest production of agricultural commodities being soybeans and broilers (USDA NASS, n.d.). According to the Division of Agriculture and Extension (n.d.),

In 2018, Louisiana generated around \$3.1 billion in agricultural cash receipts with the highest valued commodities being soybeans, broilers, and sugarcane for sugar and seed. That same year, the value of Louisiana's agricultural production and processing industries represented 2.9 percent of total state GDP. Some of the dollars generated by these industries end up being re-spent in the local economy, bringing additional value to the state through 'multiplier effects' (para. 1).

Louisiana has an economically vibrant agricultural industry. The state's agricultural labor population is also diverse. In Louisiana, agricultural population is culturally more diverse than the national average. For instance, 90.1% of principal farm operators identify as Caucasian, 8.4% identify as African-American, and 1.5% identify as neither Caucasian nor African-American (LSU AgCenter, 2018). In comparison, only 1.4% of principal farm operators identify as African-American nationally (USDA NASS, 2014a). Although the statewide racial diversity is higher than the national average, Louisiana struggles with diversity in other aspects of culture, such as inclusivity of gender in the agricultural industry.

Gender diversity in principal farm operators in Louisiana is well below the national average with females making up 12.3% and males 87.7% (LSU AgCenter, 2018). Nationally, over 30% of principal farm operators are female, and 60% male; however, this disparity is becoming larger because of a decline in female agriculturalists identifying as principal operators (USDA NASS, 2014b). Because of the diversity in Louisiana agriculture, more empirical evidence was needed regarding the cultural competence of young agriculturalists. In this investigation, the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation members were highly connected socially, professionally, and politically to the agricultural industry in Louisiana. As such, this was an ideal population to better understand the cultural competence of Louisiana agriculturalists.

## **Population Description**

This study's population included the young agriculturalist who were members of the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers and Ranchers (LFBFYFR). Eligibility for membership included: (a) age 18-35, (b) Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation member or family of a Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation member, and (c) partially or actively engaged in agriculture (M. Gravois, personal communication, February 12, 2021).

Of the 61 parishes in Louisiana with the eligibility to participate in Young Farmers and Ranchers, 21 parishes did not have representation in the organization (M. Gravois, personal communication, February 12, 2021). Because of a lack of organizational record keeping, the total number of individual program participants was not known. However, there have been approximately 100 individuals that have attend the LFBFYFR Leadership Conference annually (M. Gravois, personal communication, February 12, 2021).

To reach the target population, I contacted the LFBYFR to recruit participants using a criterion-based sampling procedure (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Through an organizational liaison, Megan Gravois, I contacted members, via email, to solicit their participation in the study. Additionally, I utilized a snowball sampling method, whereby study participants then nominated other individuals in LFBFYFR who might fit the study's population parameters (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In total, five volunteers agreed to participate, three were Executive Board members and two were not. I conducted the virtual interview via Zoom. Participants were given the consent forms and the interview questions in advance, and before the interview began, I obtained written and verbal informed consent. The participants' personal and professional characteristics are provided in Table 4.

Table 4  
Participants' Personal and Professional Characteristics

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Job Title	Industry Affiliation	Executive Board
Amy	Female	34	Caucasian	Extension Agent	Non-formal Education	Yes
Paul	Male	34	Caucasian	Farm Owner and Manager	Crop Production	Yes
Tom	Male	27	Hispanic	Loan Officer	Agriculture Finance	Yes
Mary	Female	28	Caucasian	Secondary Agricultural Educator	Formal Public Education	No
John	Male	23	Caucasian	Cattle Herdsman	Cattle Production	No

### Data Collection

Because of the COVID-19 global pandemic, face-to-face interviews were conducted through Zoom video conferencing software. Using electronic mail correspondence, I obtained informed consent for participation. Then, I scheduled individual interviews with each participant based their availability. Before beginning the data collection, I reviewed the purpose of the study and the consent for participation with the participants. A question-and-answer period was allowed for the participants to fully understand the process, purpose, expectations, and potential findings of the study. Once participants provided verbal consent, I conducted the semi-structured interviews.

During the interview, participants were asked questions such as, “What does culture mean to you?” “What are your experiences professionally with other cultures?” “From your perspective, what are the attributes of a culturally competent individual in the agricultural industry?” Each participant interview was less than one hour in duration. The full investigation

interview protocol can be found in Appendix C. The interview was audio recorded on a separate, password protected device, and transcribed verbatim, via Descript transcription software, to ensure accuracy. The verbatim transcription files provided through the Descript transcription software were reviewed with the corresponding audio recording to ensure congruence and accuracy. During the collection of the data, interview notes regarding the setting, atmosphere, and emotions of participants were captured.

### **Data Analysis**

All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim using the transcription software Descript to ensure accuracy of transcription for proper analysis. To analyze transcription data, three rounds of coding were implemented on data to emerge the findings.

#### **First Cycle Coding Round 1: Values Coding**

Values coding helps emerge the values, attitudes, and beliefs expressed by study participants. According to Saldaña (2014), values coding allows for participants underlying worldviews and perspectives to become emergent to the researcher. Through this coding methodology, *values* are considered to be the moral guidelines in which a participant lives by in their daily life (Saldaña, 2014). *Attitudes* are considered the feelings a participant holds regarding themselves, others, objects, and ideological conceptions (Saldaña, 2014, p. 131). *Beliefs* are the internal integration of both values and attitudes, with the inclusion of personal reflective perceptions of the participant's social world (Saldaña, 2014, p. 132). Meanwhile, values coding was applied to this data to discern underlying worldviews and perspectives on the affective nature of an individual's views, such as culture. According to Saldaña (2014),

Values coding is appropriate for virtually all qualitative studies, but particularly for those that explore the cultural values and belief systems, identity, intrapersonal and

interpersonal participant experiences and actions in case studies, appreciative inquiry, oral history, critical ethnography, sociology, and longitudinal qualitative studies (p. 132).

To utilize this approach, I read through each interview transcript to derive the intrinsic attitudes, values, and beliefs expressed by the participants when discussing cultural competency in the agricultural industry in Louisiana. Throughout the values coding process, 297 unique values codes emerged, as described through 124 attitude codes, 84 values codes, and 89 beliefs codes. Examples of attitudes codes included: “surprised” “shocked” “apprehensive” “defensive” “cautious” “mindful”. Examples of values codes include: “Christian” “integrity” “respect” “humility”. Examples of beliefs codes include: “location determines culture” “minorities present” “immigrant labor prominence” and “consumer driven industry.”

### **First Cycle Coding Round 2: InVivo Coding**

I also employed InVivo coding as a first cycle approaching. InVivo coding is used to describe data using the words of participants (Saldaña, 2014). This coding approach allowed me to view data using the exact terminology used by the participants (Saldaña, 2014). InVivo coding is often used when researching topics such as culture, due to the description of data through culture-specific vocabulary (Saldaña, 2014). As explained by Saldaña (2014), InVivo coding is ideal for “studies that prioritize and honor the participant’s voice” (p. 106). When using InVivo coding in this investigation, 1,147 unique codes emerged. Examples of InVivo codes included: “raised on the farm” “we do our best” “ag is real family oriented” “bridge that gap” “try my best to avoid the subject” and “close-minded sometimes.”

### **First Cycle Coding Round 3: Descriptive Coding**



I used the final first cycle coding approach, descriptive, to discern the overall topic of short excerpts from the qualitative data (Saldaña, 2014). According to Saldaña (2014), “Descriptive coding summarizes in a word or phrase – most often a noun – the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data” (p. 102). I implemented descriptive coding because of the versatility of approach when using different forms of data (Saldaña, 2014). The present study used various data sources, including interview transcripts, interview notes, and research memos. Therefore, a coding approach that was applicable to all forms of data was necessary for comprehensive analysis (Saldaña, 2014). Using the descriptive coding approach, 391 codes emerged. Examples of the descriptive code included: “diversity presence in Louisiana” “share professional culture of agriculture” “advocacy for agriculture” “domestic travel influences professional skill” and “apprehension of topic.”

### **Second Cycle Coding: Axial Coding**

After the first cycle of coding, I used axial coding as a second coding cycle approach to reduce the open codes into categories. According to Saldaña (2014), axial coding involves “grouping similarly coded data [which] reduces the number of [i]nitial [c]odes you developed while sorting and relabeling them into conceptual categories” (p. 244). Through this coding methodology, axial codes were then patterned into relevant categories throughout all sources of data including interview transcripts, interview notes, and research memos. Nine axial code categories were developed through this process. Examples of axial codes included: “travel influence” “cultural competence progression” and “diversity in Louisiana agricultural production.

### **Thematic Analysis**

After first and second cycle coding process, I used thematic analysis to story the data and interpret the axial codes into emergent themes. To accomplish this, I met with a team of experts to negotiate axial codes into a coherent story of the data. As a result of this process, four themes and three subthemes emerged that were interpreted using the Winters Group (n.d.) Cultural Competence Model.

### **Building Qualitative Quality**

To uphold quality and rigor in this investigation, I used Tracy's (2010) criteria for excellent qualitative research. Tracy (2010) stated that the following must be present in a qualitative study to be considered excellent research: (a) worthy topic; (b) rich rigor; (c) sincerity; (d) credibility; (e) resonance; (f) significant contribution; (g) ethics; and (h) meaningful coherence. Through the use and meticulous adherence to Tracy's (2010) qualitative quality standards, as depicted in Table 5, this investigation achieved its objectives and maintained rich rigor.

Table 5  
Use of Tracy's (2010) Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research

Criteria	Description of Implementation
Worthy Topic	The topic was <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant</li> <li>• Timely</li> <li>• Significant</li> </ul>
Rich Rigor	The study used appropriate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theoretical constructs, i.e., Winters Group Cultural Competence Model</li> <li>• Sample</li> <li>• Context</li> <li>• Data Collection and Analysis</li> </ul>
Sincerity	The study achieved sincerity by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offering self-reflexive descriptions of my biases, experiences, and values</li> <li>• Transparent about the approach and challenges</li> </ul>

(table cont'd.)

Criteria	Description of Implementation
Credibility	<p>The study was characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thick, rich description</li> <li>• Concrete details</li> <li>• Explanation of tacit knowledge</li> <li>• Multivocality</li> </ul>
Resonance	<p>The report was written in a way to ensure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Naturalistic generalizations</li> <li>• Transferable findings</li> </ul>
Significant Contribution	<p>The study yielded a contribution to the knowledge base</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conceptually</li> <li>• Heuristically</li> <li>• Practically</li> </ul>
Ethical	<p>In this study, I emphasized</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural ethics</li> <li>• Procedure ethics</li> <li>• Situational ethics</li> <li>• Relational ethics</li> </ul>
Meaningful Coherence	<p>The study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accomplished its purpose</li> <li>• Use appropriate methods and procedures to achieve its goal</li> <li>• Meaningfully interconnected the literature, research questions, findings, and conclusions</li> </ul>

## Worthy Topic

For the criterion of a worthy topic, the topic of cultural competency was chosen, specifically, due to its relevance and prominence in the agricultural industry, therefore coinciding with Tracy's (2010) criteria of relevance, significance, timely, and interesting. With the quantity of professional development measures and international learning experiences widely available to agriculture professionals across the United States, the notion of investigating such a prominent fixture of education and development is valuable to designers, facilitators, and practitioners of culturally competent educational trainings and experiences. Additionally, providing a deeper look into the practical significance of cultural competency in the agricultural industry allows

researchers and practitioners to pinpoint the interest and participation trends regarding cultural competence and culturally competent educational programs.

### **Rich Rigor**

To uphold a scholastically rigorous qualitative investigation, Tracy (2010) explained the necessity of complex and appropriate theoretical frameworks, data, sample, context, and data collection and analyzation processes. The Winters Group Cultural Competence Model served as the conceptual framework that guided this investigation. The framework and methodology were implemented uniformly, across the duration of the study, as researchers conceptualized, collected, and analyzed data. By using multiple sources of data, researchers were able to establish Tracy's (2010) standard of "rich complexity of abundance" (p. 841). Attention to these rigorous methods have allowed for a complex, variant view of the data, thus allowing for a comprehensive examination of all data sources.

### **Sincerity**

All individuals in the research team are deeply invested into the cultivation of cultural competence, international experiences, and the utilization of such programs to produce culturally competent agricultural professionals prepared for globalized challenges in the agricultural industry. This intentionality to self-reflexivity was executed and acknowledged throughout the qualitative research process to understand the effects of personal views and possible biases represented in interpretation of data. To counteract such errors, researchers have been explicitly transparent regarding the case study conceptual framework and methodology utilized in this investigation.

### **Credibility**

This study addresses credibility, in accordance with Tracy's (2010) qualitative quality standards, through the utilization of thick, rich descriptions and multivocality through many different participant perspectives. Through the process of data analysis, emergent themes were described with a stimulating narrative utilizing multiple different participants quotes to reiterate a singular theme or finding. This allows findings to be considered credible and valid throughout extensive ethical research standards upheld by the research team.

### **Resonance**

Tracy (2010) refers to resonance as the "research's ability to meaningfully reverberate and affect an audience" (p. 844). Tracy (2010) also noted that, "resonance can be achieved through aesthetic merit, evocative writing, and formal generalizations as well as transferability" (p.844). Through the poignant written narrative of this qualitative investigation, researchers have represented the data in a manner which has expressed the impactful nature of cultural competence in the agricultural industry, and the perspective of cultural competence in Louisiana's agricultural leaders.

### **Significant Contribution**

Although scholastically, the cultivation of cultural competence has been well researched, the notion of cultural competence in the agricultural industry and its workforce has seen much less attention from the academic community. This investigation addresses critical aspects of cultural competence, both professionally and educationally, that has been previously neglected in literature, and deeply contributes to the body of knowledge regarding the practicality of cultural competence development programs. This study also addresses the scarcity of research conducted

in the American Farm Bureau Federation, as well as its impact as an organization on members of the agricultural workforce.

## **Ethics**

To uphold Tracy's (2010) standard of ethics, this investigation was conceptualized, developed, and implemented with the utmost care for ethical criteria. This study approved by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB), an organization who ensures the physical and emotional safety and privacy of research subjects. Signed voluntary consent forms were obtained before conducting interviews with participants. All data collected were kept completely confidential, on password protected devices. As an added form of informational privacy and safety, all data will be destroyed five years after completion of the project, in accordance with IRB standards.

## **Meaningful Coherence**

This study utilized Stake's (1995) instrumental case study design to investigate the cultural experiences and cultural competence of members of Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers & Ranchers Executive Board and provide a perspective of cultural competency in the Louisiana agricultural industry. In accordance with Tracy's (2010) standard of objective achievement and supportable findings, this study fully achieved its goals of addressing the gap in literature regarding cultural competency and cultural experiences of leaders in the agricultural industry in Louisiana.

## **CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

Using Stake's (1994) instrumental case study approach, four themes emerged that represented how the culture was understood and experienced by young agriculturalists in Louisiana: (a) cultural anxiety, (b) cultural pressure, (c) the one-way (agri)cultural mirror, and (d) cultural lens expansion.

#### **Theme 1 – Cultural Anxiety**

Throughout this investigation, the participants expressed apprehension and cultural anxiety when articulating differences regarding the cultural competence of professionals in the agricultural industry. This cultural anxiety appeared to be a result of a perceived social risk associated with the discussion of cultural topics. For example, participants noted their own and others' hesitancy to discuss culture because they feared social ramifications. For example, Mary was concerned with the "angle" of the research. Further, she was visibly closed off in the beginning of the interview. She explained that this behavior had to do with the uncertainty of social perception from others. Mary explained: "I brought it up to my friends outside of YF&R [Young Farmers and Ranchers]. And unfortunately, in today's social media culture, it's just not something that anyone wants to touch with a ten-foot pole. As soon as I say "cultural," they say "no thanks."

This perceived anxiety surrounding culturally focused conversations, appeared to surface as participants hoped to avoid discussing the topic. Mary, seemingly uncomfortable during the interview, explained, "I feel like a lot of people don't know how to ask or how to approach a topic because they don't want to be perceived as insensitive or ignorant." Participants appeared to

prefer avoidance of the topic of cultural differences to mitigate the risk of offending others of a different cultural identity. Paul distinctly explained, “You can offend somebody... You can upset a person through their culture very easily over one little thing.” This sentiment was echoed by other participants who, when asked what they do when cultural differences do not align with their personal beliefs, explained they usually avoided the culture all together. Amy explained that when operating in a culturally diverse setting: “I’m not going to preach, that your culture is wrong, I usually just avoid it.” Tom agreed with this belief:

I try my best to avoid the subject [of cultural differences] with the person... Because I'm not going to change their mind and they're not going to change my mind... I guess that's my best course of action in anything that I've done. Differences – stay away from them.

Participants also expressed hesitation in addressing cultural differences or participating in culturally focused conversations because they perceived it could negatively affect them personally or professionally. Mary explained that while cultural diversity in the agricultural industry is widely present, agriculturalists are often apprehensive to discuss topics of diversity because of the possible social risk. As she stumbled on her words, she explained, “One of our full-time farmers, is a female, who is lesbian, and her partner is black. Everybody loves them.” She also described her disappointment with others who are anxious to work with those from diverse backgrounds, by jokingly adding, “nobody's trying to eat us.” Mary remarked that when the topic turned to culture, there is a belief that “everybody wants to attack the white man.” When asked how she increases her understanding of an unfamiliar culture, she rambled about her anxiety by describing:

I just felt like cautious and apprehensive... living in this cancel culture. It's like you're always scared to say the wrong thing. So, I do think if there's something about culture



that we don't understand or that we don't know, we just don't address it. You don't want to bring it up, because you don't want to bring it up in a wrong way and be perceived as a racist or be perceived as somebody who is sexist.

Prior to the interview, when discussing the interview questions with her husband, Mary shared his distressed reaction: “As a straight Catholic white male, [I am] always allowed to be attacked if I say something wrong, so I do not address the issue”. As a consequence, anxiety and avoidance to discuss cultural topics for fear of the negative ramifications, weighed heavily on participants minds, actions, and beliefs when considering their interactions with other cultures in agriculture.

## **Theme 2 – Cultural Pressure**

Participants in this study noted the extrinsic motivation and professional pressure to be a culturally competent individual in the agricultural industry in Louisiana. All five young agriculturalist in this study noted the indisputable presence of different forms of cultural diversity, including nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, and native language in the industry. As explained by John, “Every farm is culturally diverse... all across the state of Louisiana. I don't think it matters what community you go to. There'll always be multiple cultures.”

The young agriculturalists also seemed to desire cultural competence largely due to social pressure. For example, they perceived that not being culturally competent could negatively affect their reputation, decreased employee job satisfaction, and possibly decreased their potential revenues. As a result of this extrinsic pressure, the participants expressed a desire to achieve a culturally competent mindset and begin to value different perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors

in other agricultural professionals and organizations. John pensively explained, “You need to be more accepting sometimes and ask some questions or try to think about it from their perspective... I try to be accepting of everybody and I like talking to people. So, if I'm not familiar with their customs, I want to talk to them about it and just learn more.” This sentiment was echoed by Amy, who explained, “You try to research as much as possible and try to adapt to their cultures, as much as possible.” Tom distinctly added, “I've never thought any different of anybody due to what their beliefs are.” When asked if others in the agricultural industry value cultural competency, Tom explained, “I know wholeheartedly they believe the same way I do”.

Throughout the duration of the interviews, participants described the importance of learning to navigate a culturally diverse industry, such as agriculture, because of the increase of foreign labor sources. Participants noted that a lack of cultural competence would only damage personal business revenue, social standing, and the agricultural industry, as a whole. Mary expressively stated that cultural competence was “just basic human decency.” She added that if an agriculturalist in Louisiana did not value cultural competence, they would keep their opinions of such matters private. Mary freely explained, “I feel like if they don't [value cultural competence], that's something that would be said behind closed doors... They would at least fake it. That's not socially acceptable.”

With a large percentage of immigrant labor in the agricultural industry, cultural competence in the industry seemed to be fostered by the extrinsic motivation for the optimal personal and financial components. The young agriculturalists in this study also appeared to be professionally pressured into the acceptance, and subsequently began to integrate cultural competence. As John explained, “I think that if a farmer, or any employer for that matter, didn't respect the people who work for them, they wouldn't be employers. Nobody would want to work

for somebody who is just a derogatory all the time.” Despite this, the young agriculturalists in this study primarily seemed to value cultural competence when it directly influenced their business. This sentiment was expressed by Amy, who stated:

Being knowledgeable about other cultures, will help them [agricultural employers] in the long run. Whether it is making their job easier or better for the bottom line. I mean, it does someone no good to be culturally illiterate if you have to work with foreign workers all the time.

Further, Paul added that cultural competence is “definitely important.” He explained the personal benefits of cultural competence by stating, “The more you know about your colleague or the person on the side of you, the better... You are only benefiting yourself and your working environment by asking questions and learning.” Participants in this study also recognized that cultural competence was a core professionally, personally, and financially integrated standard to operate successfully and socially in the agricultural industry in Louisiana. Additionally, participants recognized the efforts of agricultural organizations to increase cultural competence and to develop more culturally mature professionals.

When asked, Amy explained that the American Farm Bureau Federation discussed culturally diverse topics with its membership regularly. She explained that agricultural organizations are “putting a lot of emphasis on it.” She added, “At a lot of these conferences, the National American Farm Bureau Conference, the Fusion conferences and at Young Farmers and Ranchers, they do educational seminars.” Other educational organizations, such as Cooperative Extension, are also engaging in culturally competent discussions and programs. Amy, an Extension employee, explained that her organization does “a good job” regarding the programming devoted to the cultural competency of employees.

The young agriculturalists also believed that education on cultural competence, such as developmental programs, should begin earlier in childhood and adolescence with age-specific concepts. John explained that these programs would be beneficial to promote cultural competence because children are “a lot more accepting.” He added, “it's better to get those experiences at a younger age than to grow up [and] you could really be more closed minded and not as open.” Amy suggested that a youth development program would be beneficial to begin the process of cultural awareness, knowledge, sensitivity, and competence:

A good idea would be doing some type of 4-H training where you explore different cultures with the kids... Just exploring different cultures in agriculture in your parish or county. Or go across the state introducing them to different cultures and maybe teaching them a little bit more about what culture is in their own parish or region.

While expressing verbal and visible hesitance, anxiety, and avoidance to discuss topics related to culture, participants, although not internally driven, expressed a motivation and willingness to learn more about other cultures and discuss cultural differences. With a motivation for cultural competency in the agricultural industry in Louisiana present, these young agricultural leaders expressed their cultural attitudes, behaviors, and perspectives in the agricultural industry were primarily extrinsically influenced as a result of cultural pressure.

### **Theme 3 – The One-Way (Agri)Cultural Mirror**

Although the participants reported feeling pressure, they also argued that agriculture was a separate and distinct cultural group, and they believed the public should make a greater effort to understand their unique intricacies rather than adapting to the expectations of others. As a result, the third theme emerged in the form of a metaphor: *The One-Way Cultural Mirror*. As an

illustration, when consumers look through the one-sided mirror they observe agriculturalists from afar and make judgments based on sociocultural norms. However, when the young agriculturalist in this study looked through the mirror they could only see themselves and were blocked from understanding values and traditions of others. As a result, a disconnect emerged by which agriculturalist and general public struggled to understand one another, which has greatly hindered agricultural literacy efforts. For example, when discussing the culture of agriculture, the young agriculturalist expressed pride and reverence for the industry because they perceived it upheld family, religion, and shared professional values. As John proudly described:

I find agriculture is its own culture of people. Everybody has a common goal. We might not have the same skin color and the same beliefs on how we do things, but we're all a really underappreciated group of people that a lot of people rely on.

Meanwhile, Mary noted that when she reflected on the word *culture*, she believed that a culture is “a lifestyle.” On this point, Tom effortlessly described the culture and lifestyle of agriculture as “family-oriented,” “religious,” and “caring.” He explained, “family values and religion melt real good with agriculture”. He added,

When I hear you say culture, my mind immediately thinks work culture. The ag culture is real family oriented. Everybody's looking to help everybody. And I guess that's what I love about it. If a neighbor needs help, they can call on you or you needing them. I know people say it a lot and people say it repetitively how family oriented it [the agricultural industry] is... It's just a lot of caring people.

As participants in this study identified agriculture as a unique cultural group, they also acknowledged that the profession has great challenges connecting with their consumers. For example, the young agriculturalists in this study largely did not the perspectives of their

consumers. Mary noted that this one-way cultural view can often be identified through the public perceptions of labor practices in agricultural production. She described her frustration by explaining, “people not in agriculture assume that when we have immigrant labor, that they're illegal Mexicans and we're paying them under the table. And that just couldn't be further from the truth in any form around here.”

Aggravated at the notion of ignorance of consumers, the young agriculturalist also noted the one-sided mirror exacerbated existing challenges regarding communication with the general public. Further, the participants perceived that their consumers were unable to understand the professional culture of agriculture. This dichotomy further contributed to participants of this investigation believing that consumers have difficulty expressing their desires and expectations about agriculture because of their consumers’ inability to turn the mirror around and see through their perspective.

Despite this, several of the participants did articulate a way forward. Case in point, Tom explained that as an agriculturalist, he aimed “to be more of an advocate for what [he] believes in and what [he] sees day to day.” He further illuminated: “I am close to the consumer side and to people that don't know about ag, so knowing what I grew up in...I can help to bridge that gap.” Tom clarified that as a part of his agricultural finance position, he gets the opportunity to help educate consumers during informational agricultural events. He noted that both children and adults in Louisiana are unaware of agricultural practices. He enlightened his distress of the lack of agricultural literacy in his community by describing,

I have kids come in and not know what rough rice looks like, knowing that everybody in Louisiana has eaten rice one way or the other. Or not know what milo is. And not just

kids, grown adults don't know what it is. Then you tell them, well that's rice before they shell it, polish it, and put it in a bag for you.”

Participants in this study also expressed a necessity for each side of production agriculture, both producers and consumers, to be competent of one another to foster more understanding from both sides. Paul explained that when operating in a culturally diverse setting, effort to progress cultural competence must be, unequivocally, “on both sides.” Additionally, he believed that it must be a reciprocal effort to cross language, communication, and cultural perspective barriers. He explained, “we [as producers] got to know a little bit [about consumers], both ways.”

Because of the lack of cultural competence on both sides, it has led to the establishment of a one-way agricultural mirror that hinders the ability of production agriculturalists to market commodities to a consumer population, who predominantly lacks agricultural literacy. As Tom optimistically explained, “I think we can do a better job. I think we need to be more aware when we come out with a product and how to represent that to the public or spread that message to the public because we know what we're talking about.”

Although there was a strong desire for producers to advocate for their way of life, as consumers shifted further from their agrarian roots, agriculturalists were left to speculate how to best relay commodity information and professional perspectives across this cultural barrier to effectively market agricultural products. Amy described the prominence of social media avenues, such as Facebook and Twitter, in which agriculturalists shared the culture of the profession with others who are not directly involved with agriculture, in hopes of illuminating the cultural barrier of the industry. She explained,

With the internet and social media, it's even easier to be aware of some of these [cultural] things and to share your own culture. That's a big trend in the agriculture industry.

[Using] social media and sharing a day in the life on my farm and what it's really like.

Additionally, Tom described how the agricultural industry is making efforts to improve the agricultural literacy, the cultural understanding of consumers, and mitigating the misconceptions that surround agricultural practices. Tom felt strongly that the profession of agriculture is actively trying to break the one-way cultural mirror between agriculturalists and consumers. In a hopeful tone, he explained:

They're [American Farm Bureau Federation] taking massive strides and trying to teach and reach out and trying to be involved with the community, as much as they can to help accept everybody. They also understand that not everybody's gonna know what we know but want to help educate those that do want to know or ask questions...I guess the biggest controversy lately has been beef ... with Burger King coming out with the all organic beef patty. They are trying to educate people on the differences and to not just condemn beef in general.

As a result, participants in this study believed the agricultural industry had its own unique, professional culture that was distinctly different from the culture of consumers. Nevertheless, young agriculturalists in this investigation realized there was a need to illuminate this one-way cultural mirror by bridging the communication, knowledge, and cultural barriers between the two groups. Because of this, agriculturalists were expanding their cultural lens to accommodate a new consumer demographic, that were further removed from agricultural production than ever before.



## **Theme 4 – Cultural Lens Expansion**

The young agriculturalists in this study also reported making strides to expand their cultural lens and alter their perspectives of other cultures through three emergent subthemes: (a) education, (b) domestic experiences, and (c) international experiences. Each culturally diverse experience, although varying in contextual applicability, allowed young agriculturalists to further progress their cultural lens. Participants noted how vastly culturally and educationally distinctive each experience was, compared to one another.

### *Subtheme 1 - Cultural Lens Expansion Through Education*

From an educational perspective, agriculturalists in this study described how their cultural lens was initially developed and expanded through their formal educational experiences. Participants noted they first became aware and knowledgeable of other cultures during their early childhood at school. As John gratefully described, “growing up in schools where other ethnicities are present, they [the school] did a good job of trying to get them [individuals of other cultures] to share information about their culture.” This cultural exposure was further expanded as agriculturalists advanced their education in a higher education institution.

Amy noted that she never realized that she had her own cultural identity before she began her collegiate educational career. She explained, “I guess college is probably when I started learning about other people's traditions and learning that I had traditions I had no idea about” This epiphany was shared by other study participants as well. Mary, who participated in a variety of culturally explorative opportunities through student organizations in college, explained that her collegiate organization activities involved “kids from all over the country.” She echoed Amy’s explanation, by explaining, “I think that's when I first realized how different South

Louisiana is from the rest of the country.” John agreed with this sentiment by adding that when he came to college, his cultural awareness was elevated through his interactions with international faculty members. He explained, “I’ve met professors from other countries, and we get along well, and they have really helped me get where I am.”

Additionally, Mary explained the value of domestic educational travel experiences she attended throughout her collegiate education: “I’m all for school trips. And so, I think those definitely helped broaden my horizons as, different backgrounds, different places with different people, how they live.” Participants in this investigation appeared grateful for their domestically based experiences allowing them to elevate their cultural awareness and knowledge through exposure to cultural diversity from a young age. With a foundation of cultural awareness and knowledge through education, young agricultural leaders enter the workforce prepared to further expand their cultural lens.

### *Subtheme 2 - Cultural Lens Expansion Through Domestic Experiences*

From a professional standpoint, the participants began to further develop their cultural perspectives as they entered the agricultural workforce. In particular, the young agricultural leaders described how both domestic and international travel experiences were equally advantageous, yet vary in applicability, depending on the context. When asked if domestic or international experiences were more beneficial, Tom reflected, “Both have been influential in my life. They’ve been influential differently, but to the same magnitude for me.”

Additionally, young agriculturalists throughout this investigation noted that domestic experiences were more impactful to their agricultural businesses because of the direct applicability of agricultural knowledge they gained in their respective industries. Mary, a high

school agricultural educator, explained that her domestic experiences in agriculture have allowed her to gain a great deal of insight for her career in the public education system. She explained,

Professionally, I feel like maybe domestic trips [were more beneficial], because as a teacher, it's easier to explain to a student how something's going to be different from Louisiana to Montana because they can still get the visual...it means more and is relatable and more teachable when I have experiences in the country.

This sentiment for domestic experiences possessing the ability to increase agricultural content knowledge was echoed among participants. Young agriculturalists in this investigation noted how domestic travel experiences allowed for the highest degree of professional applicability. Study participants appeared grateful and excited to utilize the knowledge they developed throughout domestic experiences. Paul noted the relevance of domestic trips by explaining,

If you ever watch history, California enacts it, and then damn near over the next 10-15 years, it's enacted all over the whole country. So, it's kinda like we were seeing what might be coming down the pipeline and just how they're dealing with regulations, labor housing, and everything that goes into that.

Tom also passionately described, “the domestic experiences like going to [Washington] D.C., seeing those museums, and going to Wyoming and seeing how everything functions out there. It just makes me want to work harder because I know I can do different things in life for this world.” Paul echoed the professional significance of domestic travel experiences by explaining, “The United States trips is where, in my line of work, I see more benefit, because I

will have more interaction and more sales conversations that go back and forth and sharing information.”

### *Subtheme 3 - Cultural Lens Expansion Through International Experience*

Although domestic travel experiences were beneficial for gaining direct agricultural knowledge, participants noted that internationally based experiences were more beneficial on a personal level to cultivate cultural awareness, knowledge, sensitivity, and competence. Paul enthusiastically explained: “The international trips gave me so much more perspective on life and what we're doing here in the United States...But I don't know at this point, how much it will benefit me in my business world.”

Tom conveyed the deep, personal impact of international experiences. He explained, “going to Guatemala and seeing the poverty and seeing the differences [are beneficial] because then it makes me want to work harder.” Mary described how an international trip to Portugal increased her cultural competence through meeting with an influential female agriculturalist during her experience. Mary eagerly explained,

As a woman, I was like, “You go girl, I want to be like you when I grow up!” I didn't know how women were perceived in the culture, and I know sometimes, women have a harder time getting higher-up positions. And so, I thought that was really cool to see her in a position like that.

Participants saw profound value in experiencing other cultures, even though the experiences were applied to their daily life differently based on the domestic or international context. Domestic experiences were seen as more critical for business, whereas international experiences were seen as more valuable for the personal development of cultural competence.

However, all participants in this investigation were intentionally striving to increase their cultural competence to better develop themselves as professionals in the agricultural industry in Louisiana.

## **CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to understand how young agriculturalist understood and experienced cultural competence in Louisiana.

### **Research Question**

One research question guided this investigation:

1. What was the cultural competence of young agricultural leaders in Louisiana?

### **Summary of Findings**

This qualitative inquiry employed Stake's (1994) instrumental case study design to explore the cultural competence and experiences of young agricultural leaders in Louisiana. This case was bounded through the 2020-2021 Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers and Ranchers program membership. There was a total of five study participants, who were all actively involved in agriculture throughout the state of Louisiana.

Once written voluntary consent was obtained, I conducted a semi-structured interview virtually, using Zoom video conferencing software, with each participant. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim, using Descript transcription software. For the duration of the interview, detailed interview notes were documented to describe the overall emotions, opinions, and perspectives expressed during the interview. After the conclusion of the interviews, I created analytic memos to capture my musings and understandings of the emergent findings.

Initially, the data were analyzed by utilizing InVivo, descriptive, and values first cycle coding approaches. Axial coding was subsequently employed as a second cycle coding method to ascertain categories and establish emergent themes. Through a thematic analysis of negotiating axial coding categories into emergent findings, four overarching themes and three subthemes emerged.

In the first emergent theme, participants expressed anxiety when discussing cultural topics. This perceived cultural anxiety spurred an avoidance to discuss cultural issues, entirely, to mitigate the possibility of negative social ramifications. Because of this perceived anxiety surrounding cultural conversations and experiences, the participants noted the agricultural industry as a distinct cultural identity existed that is vastly different than in other industries. This cultural distinction between consumers and producers triggered a gap in the understanding of cultural perspectives between consumers and producers, whereby each party could express their desires and expectations regarding agricultural production.

This lack of cultural competence on both sides of production agriculture has led to a one-way cultural mirror where agriculturalists can view consumer culture while consumers cannot understand producer culture. This mirror of cultural distinction hinders the ability of production agriculturalists to market agricultural products effectively to their consumer population. Agriculturalists in this investigation expressed that cultural competence and cultural lens expansion from both consumers and producers will allow for a more transparent view of both cultures. Young leaders in the agricultural industry are expanding their cultural lens through educational systems, domestic experiences, and international experiences. Although educational systems lay a strong foundation of cultural competence, for participants in this study travel

experiences, both domestically and internationally, further prepare agriculturalists to operate in the vastly culturally diverse industry.

Although domestic and international experiences deliver noteworthy benefits, each experience produces distinctly different impacts professionally and personally. Domestic travel opportunities also allow participants to expand their agricultural content knowledge, whereas international travel opportunities are more beneficial for the development of cultural competence. With such professional development opportunities available for agriculturalists in Louisiana, cultural competence has been viewed as an integrated and necessary concept for optimal success in the industry. Further, participants in this study have noted that the agricultural industry in Louisiana intrinsically values cultural competence from business, personal, and professional perspectives, and seek to develop culturally competent mindsets in others. Further description of themes and subthemes are illuminated with explanatory quotes from interview transcripts in Table 6.

Table 6  
Description and Examples of Emergent Themes

Theme	Subtheme	Description	Example Quote
Theme #1 Cultural Anxiety		Cultural anxiety, resulting in avoidance to discuss cultural topics for fear of perceived negative social ramifications, was expressed by participants when examining cultural differences and cultural competence in the agricultural industry.	“I feel like a lot of people don't know how to ask or how to approach a topic because they don't want to be perceived as insensitive or ignorant”
Theme #2 Cultural Pressure (table cont'd.)		Study participants noted the significance of a culturally competent agricultural workforce,	“It's [cultural competence] definitely important. The more you know



Theme	Subtheme	Description	Example Quote
		from a professional perspective, due to the highly culturally diverse populations in the agricultural industry in Louisiana.	about your colleague or the person on the side of you, the better... You are only benefiting yourself and your working environment by asking questions and learning”.
Theme #3 The One-Way (Agri)Cultural Mirror		The agricultural profession is a separate, identifiable cultural group, and a lack of cultural competence between consumers and producers contributes to a cultural perspective barrier, where producers can view and understand consumer culture, but the reverse is not possible.	“I find agriculture is its own culture of people. Everybody has a common goal. We might not have the same skin color and the same beliefs on how we do things, but we're all a really underappreciated group of people that a lot of people rely on”
Theme #4 Cultural Lens Expansion	Subtheme #1 Education	Agriculturalists noted their cultural lens was initially developed and expanded through exposure to cultural diversity in the United States’ education system at the secondary and post-secondary level.	“Growing up in schools where there were other ethnicities are present and they [the school] did a good job of trying to get them [individuals of other cultures] to share their information about their culture.”
Theme #4 Cultural Lens Expansion (table cont’d.)	Subtheme #2 Domestic Experiences	Agriculturalists noted that domestic travel experiences were more impactful due to the direct agricultural knowledge obtained and	“The United States trips is where, for my line of work, I see more benefit because I will have more interaction and

Theme	Subtheme	Description	Example Quote
Theme #4 Cultural Lens Expansion	Subtheme #3 International Experiences	the applicability of such knowledge to agricultural careers.	more sales conversations that go back and forth sharing information”.
		Agriculturalists explained that international travel experiences were more personally beneficial, to cultivate cultural awareness, knowledge, sensitivity, and competence.	“The international trips gave me such a more perspective on life and what we're doing here in the United States...But I don't know at this point how much it will benefit me long term in my business”.

## Conclusions

This investigation yielded eight distinctive conclusions Established through the four themes. These conclusions were empirically established; however, study limitations, delimitations, and assumptions should be considered for a holistic perspective. To begin, I conclude that cultural competence should be considered an integrated, vital, and valued in Louisiana’s agricultural industry from a professional standpoint. Participants clearly felt extrinsic cultural pressure to value a culturally competent mindset in themselves, others, and organizations in Louisiana’s agricultural system because of the professional, social, and financial implications of cultural incompetence. Due to this, I conclude the young agriculturalists in this investigation were in the cultural awareness and cultural knowledge phases of the Winter’s Group (n.d.) Cultural Competence Model. Although externally motivated, participants in this study recognized the need for cultural competence professionally and socially. Additionally, I conclude

that participants first initiate their journey to cultural competence through exposure to cultural diversity, and subsequent cultural awareness, in secondary and collegiate education systems.

Although participants in this investigation valued cultural competence, they noted a presence of cultural anxiety in themselves and others in the agricultural industry in Louisiana, due to the social risk associated with discussing cultural concepts. Moreover, participants explained how this cultural anxiety materialized as avoidance to discuss the topic of culture altogether. This further substantiated the perspective that participants reside in the cultural awareness and knowledge phase of cultural competency. Young agriculturalists in this investigation were also aware and possessed a rudimentary knowledge of diverse cultures, yet they did not seek to become culturally sensitive.

I also conclude that participants believed that the agricultural industry is a unique cultural group and noted that a culturally competent mindset is essential personally, professionally, and socially for both producers and consumers. Participants viewed themselves as a separate cultural group and recognized that agricultural commodity consumers are unaware and unable to see into their professional culture. Further, participants noted that this barrier presented challenges when communicating and marketing agricultural products to consumers who are unable to see and understand the culture of agricultural production. The young agriculturist believed that a culturally competent mindset, from both agricultural producers and consumers, could help break this one-way mirror.

Additionally, participants noted that professional development regarding cultural competence is available in the agricultural industry in Louisiana through organizations, such as Cooperative Extension and the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation. However, participants believed that programming should be tailored and offered to a younger audience through 4-H.

Lastly, I conclude that domestic travel experiences were impactful for direct agricultural knowledge expansion, whereas international experiences were beneficial when trying to cultivate and progress cultural competence in professionals in the industry in Louisiana. Participants valued domestic and international travel opportunities equally, however, they found more professional applicability in domestic experiences and more personal cultural competence development through international experiences.

## **Discussion and Implications**

### **Discussion of Cultural Anxiety**

Anxiety and avoidance when communicating and operating across cultural barriers has been addressed in intercultural literature (Dumont, 2005; Hofstede & Bond, 1984). Because of cultural anxiety, the young agricultural leaders in this study appeared to avoid the subject of culture because of fear of negative social ramifications of engaging in such conversations. This anxiety and avoidance narrative has been well documented in the academic literature (Dumont, 2005; Hofstede & Bond, 1984).

Through Hofstede's (1984) cultural dimensions framework, a structure developed to describe cross-cultural differences, "uncertainty avoidance" is a construct whereby individuals process and address cultural differences (Hofstede & Bond, 1984, p. 439). The "uncertainty avoidance" dimension of culture is defined by Hofstede and Bond (1984) as, "the extent to which people feel threatened by ambiguous situation, and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these" (p. 439). The presence of cultural anxiety in the present investigation aligns with the "uncertainty avoidance" dimension of cross-cultural relationships (Hofstede & Bond, 1984, p. 439). As such, this finding was consistent with previous literature.

Duronto et al. (2005) discovered that anxiety and uncertainty were present in individuals when communicating across culturally diverse boundaries. This uncertainty was then found to forecast an avoidance to communicate with others of a different culture. Duronto et al. (2005) explained that anxiety and uncertainty surrounding culture can be predictive of avoidance behavior and mentality. These findings further support the conclusion that agriculturalists perceive that themselves and others are avoiding culturally diverse conversations for fear, anxiousness, and uncertainty regarding the social consequences of interacting in such conversations. Moreover, agricultural organizations should implement measures to counteract this cultural anxiety, and create a trusting, open environment where cultural exploration can occur without negative social repercussions.

As a result of this study, several questions emerged regarding cultural anxiety: Can cultural anxiety be dependent on the specific culture an individual is discussing? Could agriculturalists become less culturally anxious by participating in more culturally explorative programming? What is the level of fear associated with cultural anxiety? Are agriculturalists just concerned negative social repercussions or are they concerned about the negative social repercussions? And how do we eliminate the perception of social repercussions based on culturally diverse discussions?

Additionally, the idea of cultural anxiety holds implications for systematic changes to the agricultural industry. Because agriculturalists provide the food, fiber, and nutritional maintenance of all human beings across the globe, this cultural anxiety present in agriculturalists will greatly influence their ability to cater to critical needs. With the added challenge of operating in a global COVID-19 pandemic, agricultural professionals must persevere past this anxiety to discuss cultural differences, as to best cater to the consumer population across the globe. Siche (2020)

found that the most vulnerable population to distinct alterations in livelihood due to the pandemic were chronically hungry individuals with the highest rates of food insecurity. With the fate of life and death from starvation present, agriculturalists have the ability to cater to such nutritional needs, when they do not avoid such mentally uncomfortable cultural situations.

### **Discussion of Cultural Pressure**

Although participants in this investigation denoted that measures are in place to actively progress cultural competence in agriculturalists in Louisiana, the notion that these young agricultural professionals desire cultural competence solely from an extrinsic perspective has not yet been explored in the professional context. Participants in this study noted that organizations and individuals are seeking cultural competence in various forms of programming, education, and experiences. Furthering the notion that agriculturalists in this investigation are aligned with the cultural awareness and cultural knowledge phases of the Winters Group (n.d.) Cultural Competence Model.

One way in which many education systems, organizations, and businesses promote cultural competence progression is through domestic and international culturally immersive experiences (Bost & Wingenbach, 2018; Bunch et al., 2018; Dudas, 2012; Mikhaylov, 2014; Rampold et al., 2020). This finding advances the body of knowledge surrounding cultural competence in the agricultural industry and further denotes the relevancy and necessity of a culturally competent agricultural workforce.

From a broad perspective, the theme of cultural pressure implies that cultural competence as a concept, attribute, and desired mentality is valued, only extrinsically, in the agricultural industry. Agriculturalists are motivated to become culturally competent because the lack of

doing so would result in negative impacts such as lowered social reputation, increased employee unhappiness, and lowered revenue. Agricultural organizations, professionals, and educators should strive to intrinsically motivate cultural competence in the entire agricultural industry, including the agricultural workforce and agricultural organizations in Louisiana.

From this finding, the following questions emerged regarding the pressure to adapt and integrate cultural competence into the agricultural industry. Is there intrinsic motivation at all for cultural competence in the agricultural industry? Does extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to become culturally competent yield the same level of individual cultural competence? How do we instill intrinsic motivation to become culturally competent in the agricultural industry?

### **Discussion of One-Way (Agri)Cultural Mirror**

Although the participants reported feeling pressure, they also argued that agriculture was a separate and distinct cultural group, and they believed the public should make a greater effort to understand their unique intricacies rather than adapting to the expectations of others. As a result, the third theme emerged in the form of a metaphor: *The One-Way Cultural Mirror*. As an illustration, when consumers look through the one-sided mirror, they observe agriculturalists from afar and make judgments based on sociocultural norms. The profession's beliefs in their own culture leads to a communication and cultural perception barrier where agriculturalists' perspectives are not seen or understood by the consumers. This cultural perspective negatively influences consumer expectations and produces greater challenges in developing agricultural literacy.

Kovar and Ball (2013) and Birkenholz et al. (1995) described the need for further research into the deficiencies regarding agricultural literacy. Kovar and Ball (2013) determined

that populations most targeted for agricultural literacy programming and research are elementary teachers and their corresponding student populations. The present investigation's findings on adult agricultural professionals aligns with those reported by Kovar and Ball (2013) by further reiterating the identified the need for agricultural literacy training at all age groups and life stages. As explained by Kovar and Ball (2013), "The major issue with targeting young audiences is to do so potentially excludes older audiences capable of directly impacting complex issues and policy decisions" (p. 174). The agriculturally illiterate population, who are explicitly controlling the revenue of agricultural producers, are not being reached for agricultural literacy development measures and programs (Birkenholz et al., 1995; Kovar & Ball, 2013).

The concept of cultural competence to counteract agricultural illiteracy challenges is a novel finding that complements the body of knowledge surrounding both cultural competence and agriculture. This qualitative inquiry sought to establish a deeper understanding of how professionals in the agricultural industry in Louisiana view their profession as a standalone, cultural group. With less than 2% of the population of the U.S. actively engaged in the agricultural profession, consumers of agricultural commodities are further removed from the production process and lack agricultural literacy.

Clemons et al. (2017) described the need for further research exploring how agriculturalists communicate with the general public. As Clemmons et al. (2017) noted, "The manner in which our profession explains and communicates with non-agriculturalists is not effective" (p. 2018). This notion was reiterated in the present investigation by the emergence of a one-way cultural mirror, whereby agriculturalists and consumers are unable to see transparently the communication, knowledge, and cultural components of their respective cultural identities;



therefore, presenting greater divides and challenges in agricultural literacy, communication, and commodity marketing strategies.

Through this finding, questions emerged to consider moving forward. In what ways are agriculturalists trying to break down the culturally divisive mirror? In what ways are the consumers trying to break down the culturally divisive mirror? What level of cultural competence is needed from agriculturalists to begin to illuminate the one-sided cultural mirror?

### **Discussion of Cultural Expansion Through Education and Experiences**

Although ample evidence supports the finding that international experiences aid in cultural competence development, the dichotomy present between the effectiveness of domestic and international experiences based on desired impact has not been previously established through academic research. As with previous research, this study provided further evidence that domestic travel experiences are of great value in producing an expansion of agricultural content knowledge (Kim et al., 2019; Stone & Petrick, 2013; Roggenbuck et al., 1990). Additionally, these domestic experiences have the potential to increase agricultural literacy knowledge (Brune et al., 2018). For example, there is evidence to support the ability of agritourism, via domestic agricultural farm visits and experiences, to increase agricultural literacy in both children and adults who participate in such experiences (Brune et al., 2018).

When viewing the contrasting impact of international and domestic travel experiences abilities to produce cultural competence transformation, this study provides additional evidence and validity to the capacity of international experiences to aid in the development and progression of cultural competence in participants. This finding has been well advanced throughout agricultural education, study abroad, professional development, and Cooperative

Extension literature (Bost & Wingenbach, 2018; Cunningham, 2015; Erickson et al., 2020; Lockett et al., 2014; Rampold et al., 2020; Stebleton, 2013).

This finding holds valuable implications for professional development creators and facilitators in designing optimal experiences for agricultural personnel based on desired outcomes. For example, when designing a professional development workshop where the desired impact is intended for agriculturalists to become more proficient in a specific agricultural task, a domestic agricultural experience will be much more beneficial in producing that purpose. However, if the professional developmental program's purpose is to develop and progress cultural competence, an international travel experience, or international exposure activity will be more beneficial for the desired outcome of cultural competence development.

Although, agriculturalists noted that professional development on cultural competence is already in place in the agricultural organizations, more effort, such as youth programming, can be made. This investigation provided empirical evidence for the perceived motivation and potential applicability of a cultural competence development program in youth agricultural organizations, such as 4-H, FFA, and Ag in the Classroom. Additionally, this study provided evidence for the integration of cultural diversity at all levels of the U.S. education system. Agriculturalists noted that they first became aware and knowledgeable of other cultures through school systems, both secondary and post-secondary. Exposure to cultural diversity allows students to initiate the beginning stages of the Winters Group (n.d.) cultural competence continuum, such as cultural awareness and cultural knowledge. The progression across the cultural competence continuum aids in the professional development of the agricultural industry.

Adult participants in this study also expressed that launching cultural competence and culturally explorative conversations with youth will further progress cultural competence of

future agriculturalists. This will aid in the continuous effort to break the one-way cultural mirror between consumers and producers. With a motivated and culturally competent mindset, ending the culturally divisive barrier provides opportunities to improve the revenue, reputation, and overall workforce satisfaction in agriculture.

Finally, several questions regarding the education and professional development of cultural competence arose. Why are international experiences more beneficial for cultural progression? Do domestic experiences possess the ability to develop cultural competence? What is the role of domestic and international context in individuals' cultural competence growth?

### **Recommendations**

As explained by Stake (1994), "Case studies are of value in refining theory and suggesting complexities for further investigation" (p. 245). This study was able to expand the body of knowledge surrounding cultural competence and cultural experiences in the agricultural industry in Louisiana and holds valuable recommendations for agricultural professionals throughout the industry.

#### **Recommendations for Practice**

The following are recommendations for practice. I recommended that professional development programs use domestic and international travel opportunities tailored to the precise desired outcome of the program. For instance, domestic experiences should be used in professional development when the desired outcome is to expand agricultural content knowledge in participants. Alternatively, international experiences should be used in professional development when the desired outcome is the development and progression of cultural competence in participants.

I also recommend that a cultural competence program be developed and implemented for agricultural youth to introduce cultural diversity and cultural exploration at an earlier age. The young agriculturalists in this study recognized the current efforts throughout the agricultural industry to progress cultural competence, however, they also believed development from a young age could foster culturally competent adults as they enter the agricultural workforce.

### **Recommendations for Research**

The following are recommendations for future research. These scholarly recommendations, if pursued, will further the scarce amount of literature surrounding cultural competence in the agricultural industry. To begin, I recommended using a similar qualitative methodology to pursue this inquiry in various states, regions, and countries to investigate the influence of local context on emergent findings. Additionally, I recommend scholars pursue additional research to better describe the motivations, levels, and expectations of cultural competence in the industry of agriculture. There is a lack of literature surrounding cultural competence in agriculture, therefore, pursuing further investigation will further substantiate the findings and implications of the present study, as well as build the knowledge base in this area. Additionally, supplemental research should be conducted with the purpose of investigating cultural avoidance, anxiety, and pressure in the agricultural industry to discern personal, organizational, and social approaches to counteract these barriers and promote culturally competent discussions. Further, additional research should be conducted regarding the detrimental cultural mirror between consumers and agriculturalists to discern possible strategies and programs to illuminate this barrier and promote cultural competence.

From a development perspective, additional research should be devoted to the examination of effective domestic travel experiences and international travel experiences to

promote cultural competency in participants. Furthermore, additional research should be conducted to determine what adult and youth programs are actively promoting and engaging in culturally competent programming in agriculture, and to determine the effectiveness of those programs. Replication of successful programs and the development of new programs will allow more opportunities to further develop cultural competence.

## APPENDIX A. IRB APPROVAL



**TO:** Stair, Kristin S  
LSUAG | Dept | Agricultural and Extension  
Education and Evaluation

**FROM:** Michael Keenan  
Chair, Institutional Review Board

**DATE:** 07-Dec-2020

**RE:** IRBAG-20-0076

**TITLE:** Describing cultural experiences, beliefs, and  
attitudes in Louisiana's agricultural industry

**SUBMISSION TYPE:** Initial Application

**Review Type:** Exempt

**Risk Factor:**

**Review Date:** 07-Dec-2020

**Status:** Approved

**Approval Date:** 07-Dec-2020

**Approval Expiration Date:** 06-Dec-2023

**Re-review frequency:** (three years unless otherwise stated)

**Number of subjects approved:** 15

**LSU Proposal Number:**

**By:** Michael Keenan, Chair

**Continuing approval is CONDITIONAL on:**

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects\*
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the

- individual participants, including notification of new information that might affect consent.
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.
  7. Notification of the IRB of a serious compliance failure.
  8. **SPECIAL NOTE: When emailing more than one recipient, make sure you use bcc. Approvals will automatically be closed by the IRB on the expiration date unless the PI requests a continuation.**

*\* All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU's Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents.*

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## APPENDIX B. CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION

The purpose of this study is to describe cultural competency in Louisiana's agricultural industry and to better understand the cultural beliefs, attitudes, and experiences among agricultural professionals. In order to accomplish this purpose, participants will complete a one-hour interview, via video conference software, with Ms. Janiece Pigg.

The following investigators are available for questions about this study, Ms. Janiece Pigg (contact 662-242-0468; [jpigg1@lsu.edu](mailto:jpigg1@lsu.edu)); Dr. Kristin Stair (919-649-7019; [kstair@lsu.edu](mailto:kstair@lsu.edu)); Dr. Joey Blackburn (contact 225-578-7892; [jjblackburn@lsu.edu](mailto:jjblackburn@lsu.edu)); and Dr. Richie Roberts (336-314-7191; [roberts3@lsu.edu](mailto:roberts3@lsu.edu)).

In order to participate in this study, please indicate your acceptance of the following statements:

1. My participation in the study is completely voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I am fully aware that I can withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If I decline to participate or withdraw from the study, no individuals in my organization of Farm Bureau will be notified and there will be no consequences for doing so.
2. Participation in this study involves completion of an interview with Ms. Janiece Pigg. The purpose of this study is to describe cultural competency of Young Farmers and Rancher's in Louisiana's agricultural industry.
3. I understand that the researchers will not identify me by name in any reports, presentations or articles using information from this interview. My name will also not be associated with any of my responses on this survey during analysis. I understand that my confidentiality as a participant in this research will remain protected. Subsequent uses of data will be subject to standard data use policies to protect the confidentiality of individuals and institutions.
4. All interview transcription data will be destroyed in 5 years from the time of data collection, therefore optimally protecting participant privacy.
5. I understand that there are no known risks to participate in this study and I can withdraw from this study at any time without consequences.
6. This investigation could benefit the industry by possibly identifying needed professional development for agricultural professionals.
7. I have read and understood the items listed above and agree to participate in the study.

This study has been approved by AgCenter IRB. For questions related to this study, or your rights as a participant, please contact Dr. Phil Elzer at 225-578-4763 or [pelzer@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:pelzer@agcenter.lsu.edu).

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to participate in this study

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not agree to participate in this study



## APPENDIX C. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

### Demographics of Subject

Age:

Ethnicity:

Agricultural Industry Affiliation:

Thank you for participating in this study. There are no right or wrong answers, and you can choose to not answer or stop the interview at any time. During this interview, I will be asking you a series of questions about your cultural beliefs, attitudes and experiences in the agricultural industry in Louisiana. Your responses to these questions will be kept confidential throughout the research process. All of your responses will be assigned a pseudonym name that will be connected with your responses throughout the duration and, subsequent potential publication, of this project, therefore optimally protecting confidentiality.

It should also be noted that only audio recordings will be used using a separate audio recording device and stored on a password-protected computer. Once recordings are transcribed, all original audio will be deleted. I anticipate that the interview will last for 60 minutes.

For the purposes of this study the term *culture* is defined as, “the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious, or social group”.

### Major Guiding Questions:

#### 1. Could you tell me about yourself and your upbringing?

*Sub-questions (If necessary)*

- What is your ethnicity?
- How would you describe your personality?
- What is your educational background?
- What are some of your hobbies and interests?

#### 2. Could you describe yourself as an agriculturalist in Louisiana?

*Sub-questions (If necessary)*

- Can you explain your day-to-day responsibilities in the agricultural industry?
- Why did you pursue a career in the agricultural industry?
- At the end of your professional career, do you plan to retire from a position in the agricultural industry?

#### 3. What does *culture* mean to you?

*Sub-questions (If necessary)*

- How would you describe your personal values, beliefs, and customs?

- How does your culture shape your life?
- Can you explain the primary components of a culture that you identify with?
- When you think of the term *culture*, what do you think of?
- Do you know what the concept/terminology of cultural competence is?
- How did you learn about the idea of cultural competence? Education? Professional Development? International Experience?
- Do you believe cultural competence is a constant, continuous process?
- How would you define cultural competence?

**4. How do cultural aspects such as religion, race, native language, and traditions influence your perspectives of other people and cultures?**

*Sub-questions (If necessary)*

- Can you describe the difficulty level of changing your awareness of a culture?
- How do your personal values, beliefs, and customs influence your perspectives of other cultures?

**5. In general, how does your culture compare or contrast to other cultures that you know about?**

*Sub-questions (If necessary)*

- How do you talk about other cultures with your colleagues?
- How do you talk about other cultures with your friends?
- How do you talk about other cultures with your family?

**6. When you do not fully understand a culture, what steps to do you take to increase your understanding of that culture?**

*Sub-questions (If necessary)*

- Is this intentional or a natural progression?
- Can you describe the difficulty level of changing your understanding of a culture?

**7. When you do not agree with a culture's values, beliefs, and customs, what do you do behaviorally, mentally, and socially?**

*Sub-questions (If necessary)*

- Can you describe the difficulty level of changing your sensitivity to a culture?
- Does this affect how you work/operate/view the agricultural industry in Louisiana?
- Is this an intentional modification to your behavior or perspective?

- Is this a modification to your behavior or perspective that comes naturally and easily?

**8. What are your experiences, personally, with other cultures?**

*Sub-questions (If necessary)*

- Can you describe any experiences that are internationally based?
- Can you describe any experiences that are domestically based?
- What type of personal experiences are the most influential in regard to becoming aware, understanding, and accepting other cultures?

**9. What are your experiences, professionally, with other cultures?**

*Sub-questions (If necessary)*

- Can you describe any experiences that are internationally based?
- Can you describe any experiences that are domestically based?
- Does your profession value the awareness, understanding, and acceptance of other cultures?
- What type of professional experiences are the most influential in regard to becoming aware, understanding, and accepting other cultures?

**10. What does cultural diversity look like in the agricultural industry in Louisiana?**

*Sub-questions (If necessary)*

- Are other cultures present in the agricultural industry in Louisiana?
- Can you describe some components of a culture, that is not your own, that is present in the agricultural industry in Louisiana?

**11. Do you believe that being aware, knowledgeable, and sensitive to other cultures is important? Please explain.**

*Sub-questions (If necessary)*

- What does awareness, knowledge, and sensitivity to other cultures look like in your profession?
- Do you believe that others in your profession feel the same way that you do regarding cultural competency?

**12. Can you explain an instance where you have altered your perspective or behavior to operate effectively in a professional setting where diverse cultures are present?**

*Sub-questions (If necessary)*

- Why did this situation demand a cultural aware, knowledgeable, and sensitive mindset?
- Do you find it easy to alter your perspective or behavior in situations where it is needed?

**13. From your perspective, what are the attributes of a culturally competent individual in the agricultural industry?**

*Sub-questions (If necessary)*

- What does this individual do behaviorally?
- Who is this individual intrinsically?
- What does this individual value in the agricultural industry?

**14. Could you explain any type of professional experiences in Louisiana's agricultural industry where diverse cultures are present?**

*Sub-questions (If necessary)*

- Do you value other cultures present in a professional environment?
- Does your organization value other cultures present in a professional environment?
- Does your profession value other cultures present in a professional environment?

**15. Do you believe there are differences between race and culture?**

*Sub-questions (If necessary)*

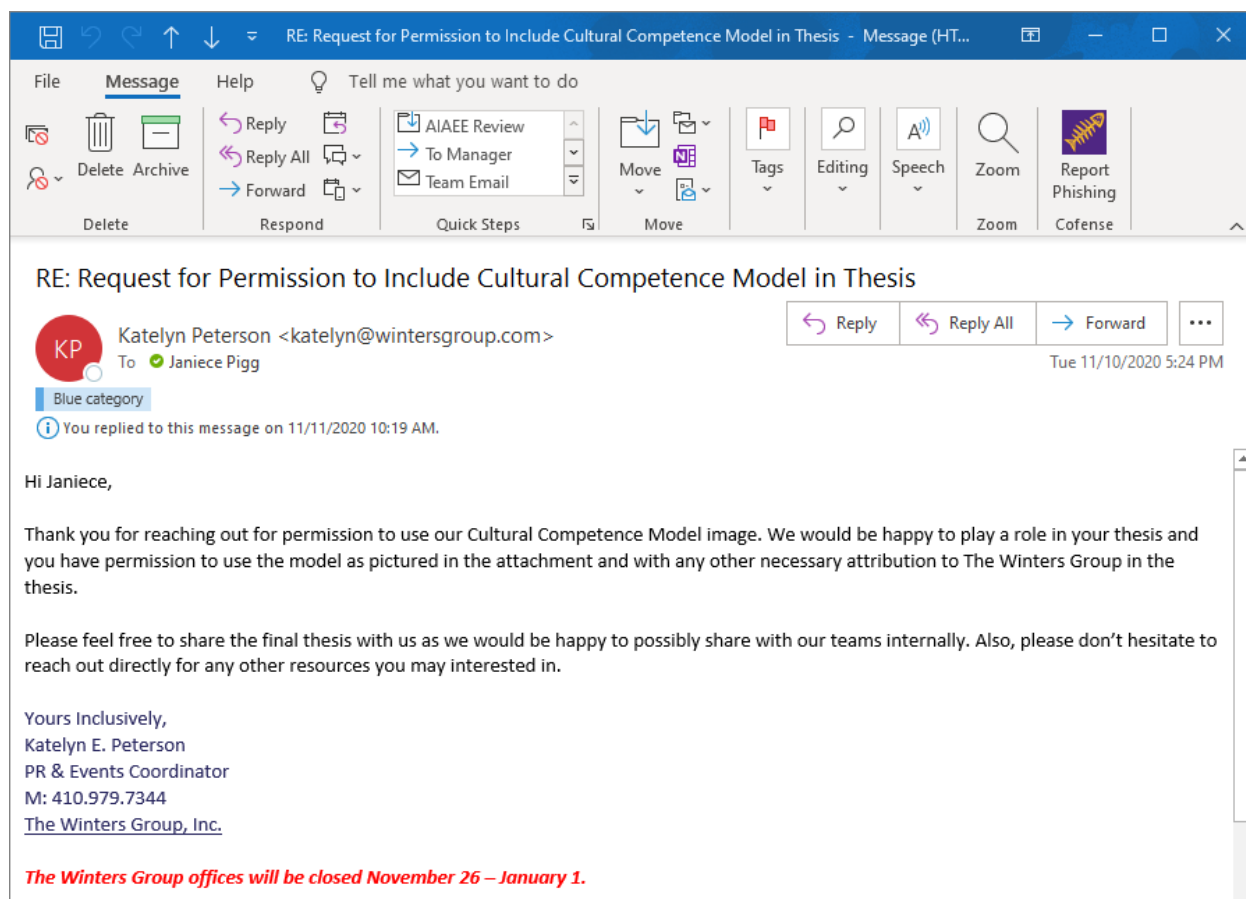
- Could you explain the differences, from your perspective, of race and culture?
- Do you see them as synonymous terms?
- Do you see that one term is an ingrained concept in the other?
- Could you explain a non-ethnic or non-racial based culture?

**16. Is there anything you wish, in regard to culture, that the agricultural industry would do to promote the ideal of cultural competence?**

*Sub-questions (If necessary)*

- What would that wish look like? A program? A training? An experience?
- Can you explain any experiences professionally or educationally that you have participated in relating to cultural competence?

## APPENDIX D. PERMISSION FOR CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



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## **VITA**

Janiece Marie Pigg, born in Starkville, Mississippi, has been passionate about agriculture from a young age. Once realizing her passion could become a career, she pursued a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Education, Leadership, and Communications at Mississippi State University. While at Mississippi State University, Janiece began to foster a love for investigative social science research in the agricultural field. To further this desire to better the agricultural industry, she decided to enter the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education and Evaluation at Louisiana State University. Throughout the duration of her time at Louisiana State University, Janiece took great pride in collaborating on various research projects exploring the vast intricacies of international experiences and their place in agricultural education. She plans to receive her Master of Science degree from Louisiana State University in May 2021. Upon completion of her master's degree, Janiece will pursue a career in agricultural leadership and workforce development in the agricultural industry.